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POET LORE

A QUARTERLY OF WORLD LITERATURE

Founded in 1889 by

CHARLOTTE PORTER *and* HELEN A. CLARKE

JOHN HEARD, *Editor*

EDMUND R. BROWN, *Managing Editor*

VOLUME XLVII WINTER ISSUE NUMBER 4

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Published quarterly: Spring Number, Summer Number, Autumn Number, Winter Number. $2.00 a copy; $6.00 a year; two years, $10.00. POET LORE, Inc., 30 WINCHESTER ST., BOSTON, MASS., U. S. A.

Poet Lore is listed in the International Index to Periodicals

LULLABY FOR MIRIAM

By RICHARD BEER-HOFMANN

Translated by SOL LIPTZIN

Sleep, my child — sleep now and rest!
See there the sun, how it wanes in the west,
Reddening hills as it breathes its last breath.
You — you know nothing of suns and of death,
Turning your eyes to the glare and the light.
Sleep, there are *so* many suns for your sight,
Sleep, my child, — my child, sleep on!

Sleep, my child — the evening wind blows.
Know we from where it comes? Whither it goes?
Dark are all ways, deep hidden and wild,
Yours and mine too and all others, my child!
Blindly we go, all alone do we go,
None can to none be a mate here below —
Sleep, my child, — my child, sleep on!

Sleep, my child, and heed not my song!
Meaning for me does it carry along,
You hear but echo of wind and of sea,
Words — the whole harvest of life may be!
What I have gained, down my grave it will go,
None can to none be an heir here below —
Sleep, my child, — my child, sleep on!

Asleep, my Miriam? — Miriam, my child,
We are but banks of a river, and wild
Flows through us blood of our past, rushing loud
On to the morrow, unresting and proud.
In us are all, — none, none is alone.
You are their life and their life is your own —
Miriam — my life, my child — sleep on!

BETWEEN THE ACTS

A play in one act

By B. BJORNSON

Translated by Joseph A. Weingarten*

CHARACTERS

King Sverre *of Norway, disguised as* Eistein, *a scout for the rival king Magnus.*
Thorkel, *spy for King Magnus (Once a rich landowner).*
Halvard Gjala.
Inga, *his wife.*
Eindride *and* Aslak, *soldiers of King Magnus.*
Gudlaug Stallar, *and a number of "Birchlegs." (Birchlegs was the name given to King Sverre's soldiers who, because of poverty, wore the bark of birch trees in place of trousers. Later, when Sverre was victorious, this name became a title of honor.)*

Setting: *A poor, smoky room. The main door has a large bolt. A low door to the right and two separate rooms on the left behind a bench. A spy-hole in the left wall. A fire is burning on the hearth.*
Place: *A log cabin on a Norwegian mountain.*
Time: *About 1170.*

The stage remains empty for a while. Halvard Gjala *and* Eistein *enter. Between them they hold* Thorkel. *All are heavily armed and dressed in winter clothes.*

Halvard. This is my homestead. It's not built for banquets, you see.

(*He and* Eistein *lead the old man to the fire. He removes the latter's clothing as well as his own. He hangs his weapons upon the wall.*

Thorkel. It could be worse.

Eistein. It was right enough the last time I was here. It's no worse now.

Halvard. It's bad weather outside, tonight. (*To* Thorkel.) I'm surprised that an old man like you should be out in such weather.

---

*This play has never before been published in English.

THORKEL. It would have been just as well if I'd stuck in the snow. (*Warms himself.*)

EISTEIN. You should have told us so when we were pulling you out.

THORKEL. I didn't ask you to help me.

HALVARD. You must be in great trouble to talk that way.

EISTEIN. Don't remind us of such things. Better find us something to drink.

HALVARD. I'll call immediately.

EISTEIN (*aside*). Call? (*Apart, to* HALVARD.) If you're calling Inga, you'd better not call her by name.

HALVARD (*likewise, to* EISTEIN). Is he dangerous? Then I'd better not mention my own name.

EISTEIN. No, not dangerous. But a wise man must always be on his guard.

THORKEL (*aside*). I wonder what those two are talking about.

HALVARD. I'll follow your advice. (*Exit.*)

EISTEIN (*seating himself near* THORKEL). Well, old man, how are you?

THORKEL. Like a deer caught in the snow.

EISTEIN. Thaw yourself out by the fire — and have a horn of ale.

THORKEL. It will make me sleepy.

EISTEIN. No harm in that. We have the whole night before us. (*Stretches himself out upon the bench. Pause.*)

THORKEL. Were you out long before you found me?

EISTEIN. Not long.

THORKEL. You're a scout for the troops that came yesterday from the South?

EISTEIN. Yes.

THORKEL. What is your strength? About four hundred men, eh?

EISTEIN. Thereabouts.

THORKEL. Let's see . . . then altogether, King Magnus has about a thousand men here in the valley?

EISTEIN. Well, quite a force.

THORKEL. Sverre hasn't got that many together. I wish he were on the other side of the mountain.

EISTEIN. Yes . . . well, maybe . . . (*Pause.*)

HALVARD (*outside*). Hello! Answer me!

EISTEIN. Isn't his wife at home?

THORKEL. She can't have gone for a visit to the neighbors.

EISTEIN. Oh, no! On the mountain you've got to talk to yourself, if you want amusement.

THORKEL. Yes, and then there's no fear of slander.

HALVARD (*outside, calling from another side of the hut*). Come in . . . There are strangers here.

THORKEL. Isn't it true that a fox hides best when he's chased by a wolf?

EISTEIN. So you think Halvard has fled because of some crime?

THORKEL. Yes, for some such reason.

EISTEIN. His face disproves that. (*Testing the sword, aside.*) This sword has been used too rarely to be hung up like this.

THORKEL. It must be quite pleasant to live here like this, man-by-yourself-style.

EISTEIN. Yes, but you have to give up all contact with the world.

THORKEL. What do I care about the world?

EISTEIN. Serve your king!

THORKEL. For all I've gotten out of it! I've done more than my share. (*To* HALVARD *who enters.*) You were calmer when you went out.

(HALVARD *comes forward without paying any attention to him.*)

EISTEIN. Well? (HALVARD *does not answer.*) What's the matter?

HALVARD. I've looked and looked — and I can't find her.

EISTEIN (*low*). Inga?

HALVARD. She's made the fire in here and in the other room. The cows have enough to eat in the stable. Either she's just left — or, she's figured on a long absence.

EISTEIN. Some accident?

HALVARD. I don't think so.

EISTEIN. What then *do* you think?

HALVARD. The worst. (*Sits down, covering his face with his hands.*)

THORKEL (*to himself, sleepily*). This mountain air isn't all they claim for it. (*Sleeps.*)

HALVARD. To have the courage to do such a thing! God! How I've been deceived!

EISTEIN (*approaches him*). Far from here? To King Magnus' men? The snow's very deep.

HALVARD (*gets up*). Why do you say that? (*Looks at him.*)

EISTEIN. It's not a trip for a woman.

HALVARD. Well, then, where can she be?

EISTEIN. Did she have some important errand?

HALVARD. How should I know?

EISTEIN (*meaningly*). Ask her.

HALVARD. Ask her? (*With a peculiar smile.*) No!

EISTEIN. So that's how it is! You're not on speaking terms. (*Pause.* HALVARD *bethinks himself of something. Is about to leave.*) Where are you going?

HALVARD. To Alf, our child.

EISTEIN. So there's a child?

HALVARD. Born last year.

EISTEIN. Then happiness will follow.

HALVARD. And she leaves him alone! Does a mother turn her back on her own child, especially when there's no one at home to keep an eye on him? No wonder I'm suspicious. (*He looks at* EISTEIN *as though awaiting an answer. Exit.*)

EISTEIN. Now I've learned that jealousy can find its way even into the hearts of two lonely people. Well, I suppose I must take a hand. (*Turns to* THORKEL.) The old man's asleep. Poor devil! There's not much to keep him awake. (*Nudging him.*) Go, lie down in the other room — and sleep soundly.

THORKEL (*awake*). Aren't you coming along?

EISTEIN. In the last seven or eight years I've grown accustomed to very little sleep. I sleep and wake any old time.

THORKEL. That's more than I can. (*Yawns.*) I'll take a nap till you call me. (*Remains standing by the door.*) But tell me first — where do you come from?

EISTEIN. I've told you. From the South.

THORKEL (*coming nearer*). It's surprising that a smart fellow like you should be only a plain soldier.

EISTEIN. Hmm . . . So long as the great lords rule over the king — they'll keep the best jobs for themselves.

THORKEL. Never a truer word said! It's only recently that a few people have gotten great power into their hands. You'll see, we'll soon have lots of little kingdoms as in the old days.

EISTEIN. Hmm . . . As long as King Magnus thinks only of obeying the Pope in Rome — just so long will the kingdom stay whole. But he'd better remember to welcome the Archbishop right well when he comes for a conference with a hundred armed men behind him. He'd better remember — and his mighty ones too — to rise, to kneel, to kiss the hem of the Bishop's cloth, and to pay him half of all the land's income — then the kingdom will hang together . . . for a while.

THORKEL. Yes. It must make every brave Norseman bitter to see the Priests and the Pope rule the ancient kingdom of King Harald. But, after all, King Magnus is a humane king. Good night, comrade-in-arms. (*He goes off into the next room to sleep.*)

EISTEIN (*alone*). Most of them are like that . . . Habit rules them . . . and neither Sverre nor Magnus . . . the humane king . . . Hmm . . . He does neither good nor bad. He gives them mead, and they, in exchange, give him their blood . . . King! Only he is king who has something to offer — something which impels him to become king. Harald was king — because he increased the kingdom . . . Haakon Adelstein was king — he built a stronghold of laws . . . The Olafs were kings — because they Christianized the land . . . Magnus the good was king — he freed it from a foreign yoke . . . God saw into their hearts and helped them bring it about. (*Looks upward, with folded hands.*) O Lord God!

(HALVARD *enters.*)

HALVARD. Am I disturbing you?

EISTEIN. Of course not. I've just sent the old man into the next room.

HALVARD. Good. Listen; while I was inside with the child a strange fear gripped me. Wherever she may be there's danger. The night is dark — the paths are deep with snow — and wild beasts are about . . .

EISTEIN. You think we ought to look for her?

HALVARD. Yes. And as soon as possible. I feel uneasy. God! If something were to happen to her.

EISTEIN. If she had the courage to try something, she'll have the strength to do it. She'll be here soon . . . (*He opens the spy-hole and looks out.*) Holy Olaf, here she is now!

HALVARD. Is she coming from the South?

EISTEIN (*lingering*). Yes.

HALVARD. Anybody else? (*Tries to glance out.*)

EISTEIN (*shuts the spy-hole quickly*). No! (*Aside.*) What does it mean? There are about ten or twelve armed men with her . . . And she's coming from the South . . . They must be Magnus' men.

HALVARD. You look worried. (*Tries to look out.*)

EISTEIN (*quickly*). Listen! She's taking off her snowshoes. (HALVARD *goes to the background and removes his weapons and clothing which he had put on to go look for* INGA. EISTEIN *looks out again.*) They're going around back to the stable. (*Closes the window*). We'll soon know what that means.

(INGA *enters.*)

INGA (*seeing* HALVARD). Home already? (*Looking about.*) No one else? (*Noticing* EISTEIN.) Oh, yes, there. . . . Oh . . . Eistein! A Magnus man.

EISTEIN (*grasping her hand*). Welcome, Inga!

INGA (*mechanically*). Welcome! (*Aside.*) I've made a terrible mistake. (*Anxiously approaching* HALVARD.) Good evening. (*He does not reply.*) Good evening, Halvard.

HALVARD. Good evening.

INGA. You're home early.

HALVARD. Earlier than you expected?

INGA. A welcome husband is never too early. (HALVARD *looks at her, but turns away.*) Halvard! (*He turns sharply away. Aside.*) Holy Mary, what's the matter? (*Aloud.*) Is Alf asleep?

HALVARD. His mother can tell you.

INGA. But I've just come in.

HALVARD. Yes, so I see.

INGA. Do you think a mother must be a slave to her child? You can wander about all day long — but I'm chained to the cradle. And it's so lively up here on the mountain! It's a wonderful life.

HALVARD. Inga!

INGA (*aside*). Holy Olaf! What have I said. I must talk to him, but I can't find words . . . I . . . (*To* EISTEIN.) Say something. (*He is silent.*) He, too? (*Looks at them. Starts to go.*)

HALVARD (*barring her way*). No! It's a slave's duty. I'll attend to our child. (*Starts to go.*)

INGA (*painfully*). Halvard! (*He remains standing.*) Halvard!

HALVARD (*coming a step nearer*). What were you going to say?

INGA. To say? . . . I wanted . . .

HALVARD (*softly*). Speak out, Inga! I'm listening.

INGA (*aside*). If I only could . . . (*Aloud.*) Have you nothing to say to me?

HALVARD. Yes . . . so much . . . that the sun would be up before I was half through.

INGA (*coldly*). As much as that? Then let's wait as long as possible.

HALVARD. Until when?

INGA. Aye, it'll come soon enough. Things will begin to speak for themselves.

HALVARD. Have you seen to that?

INGA. Not I! Have you?

HALVARD. I?

INGA. Yes, you!

HALVARD. Well, then, I have.

INGA. Go ahead — laugh. I know when the tears will come.

HALVARD. And I know, too.

INGA. Well then, speak up!

HALVARD. No! Once I spoke a word too many.

INGA. You! I'd like to know when.

HALVARD. When I asked you to follow me here. Oh, how sorry I am I ever asked you! (*Exit.*)

INGA. Oh, God! We're farther apart now than ever before. I'd exchange places with any she-wolf hungrily stalking about in the snow. Help me now, Holy Sunniva; I'm so unhappy. (*Sinks down upon the bench.*)

EISTEIN (*approaches her*). I never expected to see you like this.

INGA. Leave me alone! You caused the trouble. You bedeviled him with delusions that disturbed our peace, and you gave him wicked counsel.

EISTEIN (*dryly*). Why not talk sense?

INGA. It's the truth. Ever since you told him of the fame to be gained in the dispute between the kings he's turned away from me. He has turned away from me and from his child to follow that scoundrel, that miserable monk Sverre.

EISTEIN. Scoundrel?

INGA. Yes! Didn't he burn down my father's homestead? Hasn't he killed the Jarl Earling and the bravest of the land? Since he took off his monk's cowl — where deviltry and corruption bred — there's wailing in every corner of the land. No need, now, to light bonfires to warn people that the enemy is coming. The whole country from Drontheim to Tunsberg's in flames. Everything is fuel for the flames — ships, palaces, everything. The noblemen and peasants, relatives and friends — even his own father — are part of this conflagration. (*Coming nearer.*) And is it for him that Halvard is to span his bow? No! I'd rather see his bow smashed to pieces, broken into splinters, crumbled to dust — rather . . .

EISTEIN (*interrupting*). Even Halvard?

INGA (*frightened*). What are you saying?

EISTEIN. Inga! Inga! You're about to destroy him.

INGA. I?

EISTEIN. Don't blame Sverre. You're talking about yourself. You're terrified at what you yourself have done.

INGA. What have I done?

EISTEIN. It will soon come out.

INGA. Well, now that you know, please help me!

EISTEIN. How can I help?

INGA. You brought discontent into this house — it is only right that you remove it. Halvard wasn't always like this.

EISTEIN. I know that. Last year I spent many pleasant hours up here.

INGA. And those hours in the evening in front of the hearth. (*Sighs.*) . . . They will never come back . . . One fine morning you came along . . .

EISTEIN. I came scouting for King Magnus.

INGA. So you said.

EISTEIN. From here one can survey the whole country below.

INGA. Unfortunately.

EISTEIN. And you received me hospitably. You showed me much kindness. I shall never forget it.

INGA. You brought us reports of the latest battles. I can still see him — there at the hearth — sitting breathlessly and drinking in your words. His silence spoke more than all your words. I understood the meaning of his silence. His thoughts were no longer of me . . . no, they were sweeping far, far away . . . and his eyes were bright. You monster! You saw all my sufferings — yet you stayed here and lured him away from me.

EISTEIN. Don't be hard on me, Inga. Tell me calmly just what happened after I left you.

INGA (*controlling herself*). Alf was born. For a short while after that, everything went well. Soon, however, your words came back to torment him. Each day he made longer trips . . . and in the evenings he became more and more silent. He put aside his work before he had even started. For hours he dreamed and sat sunk in thought . . . yearning to be with Sverre in the valley. He resented our being. Then I learned that Sverre's people had burned down my father's homestead.

EISTEIN. Those things are unavoidable in wartime.

INGA. Yes . . . but your ancestors weren't born under that roof — neither were his. Then I became really angry with Halvard . . . that he could still think of Sverre. But I sympathized and grieved for my poor father, for whom he had no feeling. Is that surprising? It was terrible for that old man; he had no home, no child. I had not been a good daughter to him.

EISTEIN. But Halvard must have understood your thoughts. Didn't he say anything?

INGA. He thought that I didn't love him any more. Great God! After all the things that I had done for his sake . . . and I . . . even I kept silent.

EISTEIN. How did you find out what he was thinking about?

INGA. He began to sing.

EISTEIN. Sing?

INGA. What he kept secret from me, he expressed in song. He sat near the well, working away at a new bow — and I, who was happy just looking at him, left the child and stole behind the bushes. Then I heard him singing . . . Great God! I'll never forget it! — "It's hard for the son of brave ancestors to sit silently by his wife's side and listen to the whirr of the spinning wheel, when swords are clashing all around; it's hard to span one's bow for hares and quacking ducks, when the war cries sound from the valley where booty and power are being divided. But it's harder still to lose the best part of your home and the peace in your own heart."

EISTEIN. That was a bad sign.

INGA (*after a short pause*). He sang a lot those days . . . and all the time I followed him and I discovered what was in his mind. But he could not learn my thoughts. Why was there no one to bring us together? Many's the time I took little Alf on my lap, turned his little face towards his father so that he should speak for me. But Halvard didn't understand. Even when the little one stretched out his hands and called "Daddy" — just as I had taught him — he didn't understand. (*Pause.*) I tried to let things speak for me. I made him a doublet — as best I could — and kept it hidden until the anniversary of our coming here. I counted the days. I placed it on his stool at table. He was touched when he saw it. Neither of us could eat anything. Tears filled my eyes and I had to turn away. There, right behind me, lay two new top coats — one for me and one for Alf. I turned to him . . . he was crying. I threw myself on his neck and we cried so long and so bitterly that Alf began to cry, too. But neither of us would ask the question, "Shall we stay here longer? If not, where shall we go?" He tore himself loose from me, took his bow and left — he didn't come back until the next morning. (*Pause. She sits down.*)

EISTEIN. Halvard's coming. (*She gets up.*)

HALVARD. I can't find the milk — Alf is awake and restless.

INGA. I'll go. (*Starts to go.*)

HALVARD. No, no! You stay here . . . I'll take care of the child. (*Searching about.*) You have other things to do.

INGA. What do you mean?

HALVARD. Well . . . You must have much to talk about. It's seldom that people come here with whom you can talk.

INGA. That's true. (HALVARD *is still searching.*) What are you looking for?

HALVARD. I told you. I'm looking for the milk.

INGA. The milk is on the top shelf in the other room. You must have passed by it over and over again.

HALVARD. It's quite possible. I have such a headache that I can hardly see anything.

INGA. You don't see much.

HALVARD. Sometimes I see too much. (*At the threshold he bumps against a shield which falls on the floor. He looks at it.*)

INGA. My father's shield!

HALVARD. Your father's?

EISTEIN (*quickly*). No, that's my shield!

INGA (*coming nearer*). And yet . . . it's so similar. (*Picks it up and scrutinizes it.*) It seems to me as if I'd often played with it . . . that cross there . . . the leather at the handle worn away . . . it's just as heavy. Oh, God! To think that father's hand may have touched it.

HALVARD (*who has watched her the whole time*). Do you hear? Do you see?

INGA (*letting the shield fall*). I seem to be back in the large room of my father's. Father! (*Stares at the shield, sunk in thoughts.*)

HALVARD. It is quite evident where her thoughts are. (*Exit.*)

INGA. Oh, it is so sad . . . so sad! (*Breaking out passionately.*) But rather than go on living like this — rather than see the word freeze upon the tongue before it is spoken . . . What have I done?

EISTEIN (*to her*). I'll help you . . . Tell me quickly — those men whom you brought here . . . are they Magnus' men?

INGA (*mechanically*). Yes.

EISTEIN. And you believed that they were Sverre's men?

INGA. I don't know what I believed. I can't think any more . . . my head . . . Sverre and his warriors are already in the valley . . . and Halvard is ready to join them. I hurried

over to the other side . . . to Magnus' men . . . I'd rather have him and his followers captured . . . rather than be separated . . . (*Proudly.*) Do you understand?

EISTEIN. But he brought none of King Sverre's men along — and he doesn't intend to go away.

INGA. Neither you nor I can know anything about it. But this I do know, that Magnus' men have come too early . . . everything may be discovered. Try to get rid of them, do you hear. If he should see them, there won't be any more happy days here. Halvard will never understand that I did it only to reconcile him and my father . . . he doesn't even realize that he would kill me.

EISTEIN (*grasping her hand*). Be brave, Inga! If I were that scoundrel Sverre himself, I could not give you better counsel than I'm giving you now. Bring one of the men to me.

INGA (*mechanically*). Very well.

EISTEIN. To the others you will give mead . . . and bid them be quiet.

INGA. Yes. (*Exit.*)

EISTEIN (*alone*). Oh, this passion, this passion — it entangles more than Absalom's hair. I have had a glimpse into their souls. How changed everything is since last year. I feel as though I had just come from church. (*Quietly.*) Towards noon the battle will begin — I must arrange everything before then.

EINDRIDE (*entering*). Greetings! Are you Halvard Gjäla?

EISTEIN. No . . . Have a seat.

EINDRIDE (*sits down*). Thanks . . . I'm very tired . . . We had a hard trip.

EISTEIN. The weather is bad at this time of year.

EINDRIDE. Very bad. But it'll soon clear up.

EISTEIN. Yes . . . Stormy weather both in nature and in the land.

EINDRIDE. That's right. Who knows what the end will be.

EISTEIN. It doesn't look very promising.

EINDRIDE. It does not! As long as that devil Sverre lives . . .

EISTEIN. He was born in an evil hour.

EINDRIDE. Yes. God alone protects the land and the people. When the mighty quarrel, common folk suffer.

EISTEIN. Didn't you come on some errand?

EINDRIDE (*cautiously*). Perhaps . . . Who are you, if I may ask?

EISTEIN. If I'm not mistaken we both serve the same man. I'm one of King Magnus' men, scouting in the North, you see.

EINDRIDE. So . . . You're his man . . . he's a good master.

EISTEIN. A friendly king.

EINDRIDE. And the woman that brought us here was very friendly, too . . . She greeted us in the name of Halvard Gjäla.

EISTEIN. Halvard Gjäla?

EINDRIDE. Yes. He wants to please King Magnus and to accomplish something worthwhile for the cause. He thinks that's the way to become reconciled with his father-in-law.

EISTEIN. How?

EINDRIDE. He proposes to lure a couple of "Birchlegs" here . . . One of them is a chieftain. We are to capture them. See?

EISTEIN. A clever plan. How many men have you?

EINDRIDE. Twelve or thirteen.

EISTEIN. Too bad that the "Birchlegs" haven't come.

EINDRIDE. Yes, I know. But they'll come.

EISTEIN. I'm not so sure.

EINDRIDE. Damnation!

EISTEIN. What a trip for nothing!

EINDRIDE. Through snow and pitch-darkness. The others won't be very pleased.

EISTEIN. Think how the people in the camp will jeer. I can just imagine what that Einar Weiten will say.

EINDRIDE. That scoffer! Yes, he'll have something to say.

EISTEIN. Thirteen men went to the mountain — and all they caught was colds. They could have gotten them much more comfortably right here in the valley.

EINDRIDE. And that's not the half of it. The more I think of it, the angrier I get. I hate that fellow Halvard, and I hate his wife.

EISTEIN. And we shan't even get ransom-money for the prisoners.

EINDRIDE (*angrily*). And the ransom-money. He'll be sorry.

EISTEIN. The poor devil has nothing . . . it would be no use to kill him, if you can make it up some other way.

EINDRIDE. I don't understand.

EISTEIN. I have a plan if you'd care to listen.

EINDRIDE. Well?

EISTEIN. If you were to do—what Halvard was to have done . . . to lure a couple of "Birchlegs" here.

EINDRIDE. I don't see how.

EISTEIN. I do. You go down to Sverre's camp and ask for Gudlaug Stallar. Here is a ring . . . give it to him . . . and he'll act as your decoy.

EINDRIDE. But this ring . . .

EISTEIN. It's not mine . . . Just try it. I was out in a storm a few nights ago, you understand?

EINDRIDE. The devil! I could see right away that you weren't born yesterday.

EISTEIN. Well, you ask him in the name of the owner of the ring to hurry along with about ten men . . . He'll do it — and your journey will not have been for nothing.

EINDRIDE. I never expected to find such a clever plan in this place . . . yet . . .

EISTEIN. Sverre is not as far away as you think. Just a short distance . . . go straight ahead . . . and you'll be able to see his campfires.

EINDRIDE. As near as that? Our leaders ought to know of this.

EISTEIN. You can bring them the news yourself before the day's gone. And when you bring Stallar as prisoner —

everyone will admit that you've done a good day's work.

EINDRIDE. But . . . ten men . . . I think that . . .

EISTEIN. Too many, you think?

EINDRIDE. Especially when Gudlaug Stallar is with them . . . we must handle this thing very carefully.

EISTEIN. But I'm here too.

EINDRIDE. Yes . . . I see that you're strong and trained in arms . . . still . . .

EISTEIN. You're forgetting Halvard. He's the best shot in the Westland . . . you know that he has no equal.

EINDRIDE. Is Halvard also with us?

EISTEIN. Before the "Birchlegs" reach the house, he will have brought down at least three.

EINDRIDE. Is he as good as that?

EISTEIN. He never misses.

EINDRIDE. Is that so?

EISTEIN. He can shoot a bird on the wing and a hare on the run.

EINDRIDE. So there's no danger?

EISTEIN (*laughing*). The worst that can happen is that he will dispose of too many and leave none for you.

EINDRIDE (*joining in the laughter*). Well then, I'll go down. I'll take the shortest path.

EISTEIN. Good luck.

EINDRIDE. Thanks. It makes me laugh . . . clever . . . clever.

EISTEIN. Try to catch a glimpse of Sverre himself.

EINDRIDE. That's exactly what I was thinking about. It can't do any harm.

EISTEIN. People say, though, that he's possessed by the devil.

EINDRIDE (*mysteriously*). Don't speak of it, comrade! My cousin saw him in the battle of Jlevold . . . They say he has a pair of eyes . . . brrr . . .

EISTEIN. So? Better hurry along, comrade.

EINDRIDE. Yes. Farewell.

(INGA *enters.*)

INGA (*holding him back*). Where are you going?

EINDRIDE (*in the door*). To Sverre.

INGA. To Sverre? (*To* EISTEIN.) What sort of a plan did you make?

EINDRIDE. The best I've ever heard. Make way for a traveler. (*Exit.*)

INGA. I have often wondered whether you really are a follower of Magnus.

EISTEIN. That's as may be.

INGA. Whoever you are . . . if it's in my power to reward you . . . I shall do so.

EISTEIN. It seems as though you knew what was going on.

INGA. I have an idea.

EISTEIN. Did you serve them?

INGA. Yes. But I don't think it was wise. They're making so much noise that Halvard will surely hear them.

EISTEIN. No danger in that.

INGA. You're in a good mood, it seems.

EISTEIN. Give me your hand.

INGA. Why? (*Obeys.*)

EISTEIN. A pretty hand.

INGA. It used to be even prettier.

EISTEIN. Your fate is written here.

INGA. Are you a fortune-teller?

EISTEIN. No . . . But everything seems to pass before my eyes.

INGA. Tell me — what do you see?

EISTEIN. I see . . .

INGA. Go ahead! I'm hemmed in on all sides by a towering wall. You can't realize how I yearn for light.

EISTEIN. Both your wishes will be fulfilled.

INGA. Which?

EISTEIN. To become reconciled with your father and with your husband . . . and to reconcile them with one another.

INGA. You knew that anyway — but when will it happen?

EISTEIN. Before the day is done.

INGA. I knew you were only joking.

EISTEIN. I see even more.

INGA. Tell me!

EISTEIN. Before the day is ended, all of you — you,

little Alf, and your husband — will be gone from here to a new home.

INGA. If it were only true!

EISTEIN. . . . And you will reach a king's palace.

INGA (*quickly*). Not Sverre's?

EISTEIN (*letting her hand go*). Who knows? . . . I have prophesied.

INGA. No, I have no faith in you. I'm still standing here in the mountain-fog and staring ahead. I can't see a hand's-breadth away, and my heart is so heavy . . . O God, I wish I were dead!

EISTEIN. You're a child, Inga. You cannot mean that.

INGA. Yes. I mean it. Then — Halvard might understand me. Everybody . . . little Alf, my father . . . would be sorry for me . . . and I'd be so happy.

EISTEIN. One ray of light would evaporate all your sorrows like dew. Believe me, sorrow that finds an outlet passes quickly. An open wound is soon healed.

INGA. But I can't see the end.

EISTEIN. Your sorrow is not so great.

INGA. Is your own sorrow worse?

EISTEIN. No, not mine . . . I'm thinking of others!

INGA. Whom do you mean?

EISTEIN (*first to her, then almost to himself*). There are men who govern many people . . . who are the Pillars of the land. They must conceal their worries . . . even if they gnaw at their hearts. Even when within them they smart and bite, they must smile and they must jest. They must inspire courage . . . though they themselves have none. There are noblemen who possess great store of good counsel for their country. But misunderstanding steps in, and to do good, they must resort to death and destruction. Yes, they are obliged to pour out a patient's heart's-blood in their intent to heal. I know a nobleman who was regarded as the savior of his country, but he was its curse. Terrified at his destiny, he fled from the stricken corpse-like faces that stared at him from all sides . . . he would have fled even from his own fatherland, like a pariah . . . if so many did not depend upon him and cling to him for help. So, Fate dragged him from one vale of blood to the next . . . from one burning city to the next . . . over corpses and smoking ruins . . . and all

hell was loosed about him. The devil walks by his side . . . some even say that he is the devil himself. While they are butchering each other as cattle are butchered, he dare not lay his hand on anyone, lest he magnify his own unhappiness. Mass before the battle; mass after the battle . . . he seeks to console and to heal . . . to do good and to bring peace to all who seek it — but there is one to whom he can bring none — himself. Yet I know one who will endure despite all of hell's torments. He bites his lips and conquers all pain . . . he spreads laughter and good cheer. And the more people fall around him, the more madly he laughs. And I know one, too, so masterful that he will endure until God and the people realize that he strove for the best.

INGA. Holy Sunniva!

EISTEIN. Ah, I forgot myself. I spoke foolishly . . . and at a wrong time.

INGA. Tell me, you are not speaking of Sverre, are you?

EISTEIN. Sverre? No, he lives so much with himself that, of all those who surround him, very few know what he thinks or feels.

INGA. It seemed as though an avalanche had smothered me. My own worries seem to have been buried. (*Singing is heard.*)

EISTEIN. What's that? (*Singing continues.*)

INGA. Oh! That's the mead. Didn't I tell you? It wasn't wise. Now Halvard will know they're here.

HALVARD (*entering*). What's that noise? Has someone come to the mountain?

EISTEIN. Well, now the fat's in the fire.

INGA. God help us!

ASLAK (*calling into the room*). Give us more mead while we are waiting. (*Tries to enter.*)

HALVARD. Who are you? What do you want? Get out! I must see what the trouble is. (*Pushing the fellow out.*)

INGA. He'll find them . . . and he'll think God knows what . . . he'll throw me out of the house.

EISTEIN. You were so brave a few minutes ago.

INGA. I will get little Alf to help me . . . I will go out to Halvard and speak to him . . . He must listen to me . . . Stranger, you have a kind heart — I know that — tell him what you know of me . . . it's high time.

EISTEIN. Don't worry, little one. (*To* HALVARD *as he enters.*) Did you get rid of him?

HALVARD (*somberly*). Here's his sword.

EISTEIN. And where's he?

HALVARD. Dead.

EISTEIN (*aside*). That was not wise.

HALVARD. The fellow had the temerity to say . . . (*Tries to smile*) but that was pure foolishness . . . that you had promised them in my name . . . that they would find here a leader of the "Birchlegs." No one can say such things and go unpunished . . . those were his last words.

INGA (*to herself*). Oh, God!

HALVARD. Trying to make me out a traitor. My worst enemy could not have attempted anything more evil. Yet, as I told you . . . it cost him his life. He'll tell no more lies.

INGA (*softly, almost kneeling*). Halvard!

HALVARD. No! No! Don't excuse yourself . . . I believe you . . . that's why I killed him. See . . . my sword is still bloody. (*Throws it to the ground.*) You could never do that much . . . No, because you love me.

(EISTEIN *goes into the other room where* THORKEL *is sleeping. Tumult outside, becoming louder and louder.*)

INGA (*upon her knees*). Halvard! Halvard! Listen to me!

HALVARD. There's no need, I tell you. None whatsoever.

INGA. By Holy Olaf, by Pious Sunniva, by all . . .

HALVARD (*darkly*). Don't swear!

VOICES. Dead! Is he dead? Killed! (HALVARD *arms himself.*)

INGA. If I could only fight!

VOICES. Let us in. (*They push against the door.*)

HALVARD (*draws the bolt*). No one enters.

VOICES. Open the door! (*Noise grows louder.*)

HALVARD. Look to yourselves, people! And why not? (*Tries to draw the bolt.*) Very well.

INGA (*springs up*). No! No! No!

HALVARD (*stops short*). Why do you stop me? What have I to live for?

INGA. If you wish to die — take me along.

HALVARD. What's that?

INGA. Take me along! I'm a thousand times unhappier than you. (HALVARD *stands there doubting.*) Try me . . . and you'll see.

HALVARD. No! No! I won't listen.

(THORKEL *enters.*)

INGA (*seeing* THORKEL). Father, father! God! You here?

THORKEL. Inga! My child! (*They embrace.*)

HALVARD. What? Inga's father?

EISTEIN. Yes. It's Thorkel. I knew you'd never seen him.

HALVARD. Now I understand . . . No, I don't even begin to understand.

INGA. You came just in time, dearest father.

THORKEL. It's thanks to this fellow that I found you. I knew you were somewhere on the mountain. Wherever I found a path, I followed it, looking for you. Oh, God! The pain you've caused me. I'll never let you leave me again!

INGA. Never, never! I'll never leave you again!

HALVARD. Ha! So, now we have the truth!

INGA (*on her knees*). Can you ever forgive me?

THORKEL. Yes, child. You can't realize how much I've missed you. But you look so unhappy . . . you've cried . . . your hair is disheveled. (*Fondles it.*) What's the matter, child? Oh, I understand. That scoundrel . . . I won't even mention his name.

INGA (*gets up*). Father! Father!

HALVARD (*stepping forward*). Here he is! Halvard is the man.

THORKEL. My savior of yesterday! You're too bad a man to have done such a good deed.

HALVARD. You think so?

THORKEL. But God has allowed me to save my child from your power.

(*Three knocks on the door.*)

A STRONG VOICE (*outside*). We have decided. If you don't open, we shall burn down the house.

HALVARD (*deciding*). Yes, I'll open. (EISTEIN *bars the*

door.) Get away! You're in league with those outside. You've conspired with them. But you needn't have called so many . . . for . . . (*Places his hand upon his breast.*) It's already done. (*Tries to go out.*)

INGA (*clasping her father*). Hold him!

EISTEIN (*at the door*). You're not going outside. This is the time for all of you to stay here and to speak out.

ALL. Speak out?

EISTEIN (*horrified, to himself*). Silence is more deadly than words. (*Loudly and vigorously.*) Speak out, I say, you wretched men! Don't you see that God's judgment is upon you? The house is on fire and is burning. But by Saint Olaf I'll let it collapse before I let you out unless you speak and tell the truth.

HALVARD (*darkly*). We've kept silent so long — there is no use in speaking now . . . not in these last few minutes that remain.

EISTEIN. Think of Alf!

INGA. }
HALVARD. } Alf! (*Both wish to go to him.*)

HALVARD (*remains standing; pause*). Very well. One of us must live for the child. Listen, wife! For a long time I've sympathized with Sverre and his "Birchlegs." Many a night I've dreamed of winning fame and honor with him. And in the days I dreamed that too. But I'd never have drawn bow for him without your consent, not even when I could hear his men fighting and shouting near at hand. Never! Never! Do you hear? Yet you believed I would . . . and you believed maybe even more . . . You thought of leaving me. Secretly you devised means. In silence you regretted the day you came here with me. You loved your father more than you loved me. I knew it, but I didn't have the courage to hear you say it. Now I've lived to see the day when I've both seen and heard it. I'd rather have waked in hell . . . I tell you that this one hour has torn all love from my heart. I curse the hour I first saw you. I'll blot out that memory among our enemies outside, or down yonder with King Sverre. There, they say, Death is a frequent guest. I'm going there now. (*Starts to go, turns to look at* INGA. *She remains immovable.*)

THORKEL. I'm a man of few words, but this I can tell you: his abuse means nothing. Come, my poor child! Bring your son along. Until now it has been his; now it shall be mine. (*Takes her by the hand and starts to leave.*)

EISTEIN. You shall not leave.

THORKEL. We'll see about that. (*Drawing his sword.*)

EISTEIN. Ask her if she wants to go with you.

THORKEL. That's my affair.

EISTEIN. Ask her! (INGA *is immovable as before.*)

THORKEL (*after a pause*). Answer, child! But let me tell you this — you choose now between me and him — and you choose for the last time . . . him or me!

INGA. You or him!

THORKEL. By Saint Olaf! Choose!

INGA. Very well, then. I love you both, that is the truth. I believed that I could make you friends . . . that's the crime I committed . . . but since I must choose . . . though I am driven away . . . though he seeks to die . . . Pious, sweet Sunniva . . . I can do no otherwise . . . I choose as I have chosen before, yesterday — today — and every day . . . I choose Alf . . . and you, strong, stern Halvard. (*Falls to her knees and clasps his feet.*)

HALVARD. Inga! (*He picks her up and embraces her.* THORKEL *drops the sword.*)

EISTEIN (*coming forward*). Now, that door is open. You can leave, you heartless old man, if you really are so . . .

INGA (*stretching out her hand to her father*). Father! Oh, father!

(*Clash of arms outside.*)

EISTEIN. Quiet! Listen!

HALVARD. I hear the clash of arms.

EISTEIN. They are here!

A STRONG VOICE (*outside*). Onward, warriors! Crusaders! Faithful men of Holy King Olaf!

THORKEL. Sverre's battle cry!

EISTEIN. It's Gudlaug Stallar's voice. (*Noise of battle during the entire following scene.*) The strong mead is doing its work. The enemy is drunk. They'll soon be beaten, and we shall be delivered.

INGA. Deliverance? Ah, I understand. You're not

King Magnus' man. (*Full of misgivings.*) But who *are* you?

HALVARD. Who are *you?*

THORKEL. Yes. Who are *you?*

EISTEIN. Who am I? Some call me a cursed monk who has usurped many rights — some say I am the devil's companion — others say that I am the devil himself. Some, however, say that I am Sverre Sigurdson, rightful heir to the throne of Norway. Who is right?

ALL. King Sverre! (HALVARD *and* INGA *fall upon their knees.*)

EISTEIN. Up, children! This is no time for homage! (*Pointing to* THORKEL.) According to my old habit, I came here to scout. I met him, and I believed that in return for your hospitality I ought to bring him with me. I hope I've convinced you that the devil is not as black as he is painted. And between the battles we are not so terrible as during the battles.

INGA. My Lord the King!

SVERRE (*to* THORKEL). And you, old man. My people burned your homestead . . . There is a better one waiting for you a few miles north.

THORKEL. My king!

SVERRE. Take it as restitution. You are old and tired of warfare; take your daughter to you . . . (*to* INGA) and if I may . . .

INGA (*pushing* HALVARD *to him*). Take him. He must serve such a man.

(GUDLAUG STALLAR *and a few "Birchlegs" come in. Through the opened door, the glare of a blazing fire can be seen.*)

STALLAR. Greetings, my king!

SVERRE. Done already?

STALLAR. Finished.

SVERRE. Here are three or four men for my army — Halvard Gjäla.

STALLAR. You are heartily welcome.

SVERRE (*to* THORKEL). Your son-in-law will soon have a position worthy of your daughter. It will be best for all concerned . . . if you both surrender.

INGA. }
HALVARD. } Father!

THORKEL (*embracing them*). My children!

SVERRE. Hurry and get the child! (*Both parents exit.*)

STALLAR. If we stay here much longer, we'll burn.

SVERRE. You're right. Things are getting a little hot. Come!

CURTAIN

THESE SUDDEN STARS

These sudden stars are mirrored in his eyes
Who slumbers through the fallow hours of noon,
But must go laboring up the midnight skies
Like young Adonis, lusting for the moon.
Shedding his earthly raiment, fold on fold,
To stand transfigured on the ultimate hill,
He cups his heart, in vain attempt to hold
The moment at its crisis, ere it spill.

Sorcery strange and hidden from the light
Enchants who wanders in the perilous way
Of starshine, flickering in the blazoned night
Like flaming pyres: Oh, touched with godhead, they
Who are consumed in that Olympian fire —
Burning like stars at night with white desire!

Ruth Brandes de Bedts

THE HANDCART EXPEDITIONS OF THE MORMONS THROUGH IOWA

By EDWARD NEHLS

"The Lord, through his prophet, says of the poor,
'Let them come on foot, with handcarts or wheelbarrows;
Let them gird up their loins, and walk through,
And nothing shall hinder them.' "

The voice of one crying in the wilderness,
The words repeated by everyone, each unto himself,
Through the long nights of the late summer months
When stars were thrown at the sky.
The words repeated by everyone, each to the other,
Through the long days of the late summer months
When the prairie sun burned in the sky,
And through the long days of the autumn months
When the grasses were parched for lack of rain,
And the oxen moved with slowly plodding step
Westward, ever westward, and following the sun.

"Let them come on foot, with handcarts or wheelbarrows."

Had not the prophet himself so spoken?
And they had kissed their loved ones good-bye,
And they had left their homes across the sea,
And they had wiped away the tears
That they could see into the West,
And they had said again unto themselves
That nothing should hinder.

Westward from the shores of the Mississippi they had come.
Taller than the others, the leader had shielded his eyes from the sun
And peered ahead.
And those who stood beside him there did likewise
To see the visions that were burned upon their hearts
Materialize into the city of the blessed sea gulls,

Focus into the city by the Lake of Salt,
Substantialize into the Zion of the prophet,
And then they would be home.
Rest could then be had,
And food be set before them,
Food that tasted palatable to the mouth.
And they could join their voices in the hymns of praise.

"Let them come on foot, with handcarts or wheelbarrows,
And nothing shall hinder them."

The voice of the prophet ringing in the wilderness,
The words repeated by everyone, each unto himself,
Through the long days and nights of the late summer months.
And without turning back, the men had tightened their belts
And squared their shoulders
And raised their eyes unto the west,
And they had taken the step of faith, forward and ever onward.
Walking,
Plodding,
Tramping,
Marching,
Stumbling,
Falling,
Rising,
Pausing only to eat and to drink and to sleep.

"Let them come on foot," the prophet had said.

And men and women and children had listened,
Listened to the voice of one crying in the wilderness,
And they had followed.

"Let them come with handcarts," the prophet had said.

And through the afternoons of the long summer days,
The men had sawed the solid wheels,
The men had fastened on the rims of iron,
The men had built the axles and the tongues and the boxes
And had fitted them into place,

While the women had knitted and sewed and made new
clothing,
And the solemn-faced children had watched with quiet eyes.
Then the handcarts were ready,
And the supplies were loaded in:
Baggage and clothing and bedding,
Tents allotted to every group,
Ten ounces of flour for each day's ration of food,
And half as much for each child,
And rice and sugar and coffee and bacon.
Teams of oxen were prodded into place,
Oxen with quiet, tired eyes,
Eyes like those of the solemn-faced children,
Eyes that looked and suffered but could not comprehend.
And the aged and the maimed and the suffering
Were helped into the carts.
Then did the men with Zion in their eyes
And the voice of the prophet ringing in their ears
Crack the whips into the morning sun,
Crack the blacksnakes over the backs of the oxen,
And the procession started forth into the West.

"Let them come on foot, with handcarts or wheelbarrows;
Let them gird up their loins, and walk through,
And nothing shall hinder them."

And nothing could hinder the men and the women,
The poor with their Faith turned toward Zion.
And only the children and the oxen with the tired eyes
Could neither comprehend nor understand.

Nothing shall hinder them?
Nothing but the bodies of the men and the women and the
children and the oxen.
(The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.)
Bodies can hinder when the food runs low,
When the endless walking and tramping tires the strongest
unto death,
When children die in their mothers' arms
Or on their fathers' backs,

And the parents know it not
Until the halt for rest is called.

Nothing can hinder them?
Nothing but the untimely deaths of the aged.
(The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.)
Time must be taken to dig the shallow grave
When the cold autumn moon glows through the frosty air.
Time must be taken to bury the dead,
Time must be taken to shovel the dirt
And pat it firmly into a mound.
Time must be taken to say a prayer.

Nothing can hinder them?
Nothing but the rivers that must be forded,
Rivers that run dark and deep,
Rivers that foam and rush over rapids,
Rivers that are jealous of all life submitted to them.
Nothing but the plains that stand high with grass and bush,
Nothing but the weeds that entangle the handcart wheels,
Nothing but the mud that sinks with the weight of a foot,
Nothing but the quicksand at the river's edge,
Quicksand that swallows the unwary child or dog.
Nothing can hinder them?
Nothing but the heat of the summer sun
That burns deep within the hide of the oxen,
That makes the eyes of humans swim with tears to look about.
(Heat that oppresses and makes the head throb with pain.)
Nothing but the autumn that brings the cold,
That makes the poor remember the discarded bedding
Left behind when the oxen died or had to be killed for food
And the handcarts grew too heavy for human strength.
Nothing but the ice and snow of the winter months
That blow with a blasting wind
Over the snowbound caravans
Heading ever westward to the Lake of Salt.
Nothing but the hunger that tears at the bowels of the unfed
people
When their rations of food have been cut
And cut
And cut,

When the homes of the settlers with their helping hands
Have long ago been left behind.

"Let them gird up their loins, and walk through,
And nothing shall hinder them."

The voice of one crying in the wilderness,
The words repeated by everyone, each unto himself,
Through the long nights of the late summer months
When stars were thrown at the sky.
The words repeated by everyone, each to the other,
Through the long days of the late summer months
When the prairie sun burned in the sky,
And through the long days of the autumn months
When the grasses were parched for lack of the rain,
And the oxen moved with slowly plodding step
Westward, ever westward, and following the sun.

Let the men with the blacksnake whips
Still coiled and clutched within their hands
Keep the vision of Zion burning before them.
Let the women with their knitting needles still busy
Walk beside them at the handcart's wheels,
Their faith divided unquestioned between God and man.
Let the children who survive walk or ride or sleep along,
The solemn-faced children of the tired eyes.
And let the patient oxen lie where they fall,
Or let the beasts be killed and eaten
When the food runs low.

"Nothing shall hinder them," the prophet had said.

Nothing can hinder them,
These men and women and children and oxen.
As long as they live, they will move,
Move onward to the city of the blessed sea gulls,
Move onward to the city by the Lake of Salt,
Move onward to the Zion of the prophet.

These people, these poor are a part of the band of Christian
martyrs,
A part and parcel of those men and women

Who die for the sake of a vision.
Faith as strong as that of the saints of old!
Faith of the early Christians boiled in the vats of oil!
Faith of the early Christians scourged with the leather thongs!
Faith of the martyrs crucified,
Stoned,
Beaten,
Flayed,
All for the sake of a vision.

The world has seen at least two such journeys of the men of Faith:
That exodus of the humbled children of Israel,
Who fled the spears of Pharaoh's soldiers,
Walking dry-shod through the calmed Red Sea,
Wandering for forty years in the wilderness,
Sustained by manna,
And led on by the Pillar of Cloud by day,
And the Pillar of Fire by night.

And the second is like unto it:
This, a modern pilgrims' progress.
Men and women and children and oxen,
Men with the promise of Zion before them,
Women with their faith divided unquestioned between God and man,
The solemn-faced children of the tired eyes,
And the dumb, unquestioning oxen.
Walking,
Plodding,
Tramping,
Marching,
Stumbling,
Falling,
Rising,
Pausing only to eat and to drink and to sleep.
All to see the visions that are burned upon their hearts
Materialize into the city of the blessed sea gulls,
Focus into the city by the Lake of Salt,

Substantialize into the Zion of the prophet,
And then they would be home.

"The Lord, through his prophet, says of the poor,
'Let them come on foot, with handcarts or wheelbarrows;
Let them gird up their loins, and walk through,
And nothing shall hinder them.' "

TWO POEMS

By FRANCES R. ANGUS

HE LIVES

He lives as I would live, alone
In deep spruce-wood, a stream with trout
Nearby. He knows far ponds where herons
Nest, and lilies grow just touched
With rose of dawn. The woods with winter's
First snowfall are prayer and God
To him, beauty and love. I wish
That beauty, love, and faith so filled
My heart that fear could find no room.

QUIET DAY

All day the rain came down
Sleepily
And from the fields there rose
A film of grey that darkened
In the marshy hollow.
Tenuous,
The curtain hung from trestle
To the meadow stream
Where yellow sedges sleep.
Warily
The local train broke through
The quiet; called and called
Again, its shrill voice gentled
By the mist.

THE LITHUANIAN FOLK SONG THE DAINA

Its Influence on the Survival of a Denationalized People

By DEMIE JONAITIS

Today the history of the Lithuanian folk song stands as a challenging irony in the face of dictators who would annihilate nations and their cultures. A similar experiment in denationalization was practised upon the Lithuanian people for a period of centuries. Constantly, from the fifteenth century when Poland began to realize her dream of Polonizing Lithuania, straight through to 1795 when Russia and Germany took over that dream of subjugation, and on down to 1920 when Lithuania finally won her independence, her people fought extinction. The Jewish people of the world have survived by virtue of their history and religion; but Lithuanians were long ignorant of their history and their religion was Polonized. For centuries it was the *daina*, Lithuania's simple, innocuous-seeming folk song, that was more instrumental than perhaps anything else in helping her people withstand foreign absorption and complete demoralization.

In Chaucer's day Lithuania was the largest independent state in Europe, her territory extending from the Baltic to the Black Sea. Her language was, and still is today, the most ancient of Indo-European languages in use. But having long been secluded from the influences of Europe by deep forests, rivers and swamps, she was among the last of civilized nations to have her pagan religion subjected to attack by the Crusaders. Although earlier rulers had professed to relinquish their paganism, it was only in 1387 that Lithuania finally accepted Christianity and traces of paganism persisted even into the 17th century. The onslaught of the Crusaders, however, undermined her national morale: her newly adopted religion became foreign politics; politics became intrigue, disaster and loss of power to Poland with centuries of oppression to bear. She had been a land of

noble savages worshiping Perkunas, God of Thunder; one of her rulers had sagaciously advised the Pope: "Worship and let worship"; but divided first under the rule of Poland, then under Russia and Germany, she lost her old pagan nobility. She became the land of vicious serfdom and of poverty. Her intellectuals must live as self-acknowledged aliens or suffer contempt, exile and death. The only education possible for the common people was self-degradation. From one generation to another, for hundreds of years, the lesson was brought home by Polonized squire and priest that all things Lithuanian were base and sinful. The language was ridiculed. In 1595 the first Lithuanian book was printed, a catechism with a Polish preface, in which the author sharply reprimands the Polonized upper classes for having discarded their own language. "I do not wish to censure the learning of foreign languages," he writes, "but I do censure the scorn of our Lithuanian language." Finally, however, even the printing in Lithuanian was prohibited. The Polonized church, holding a powerful grip on the now deeply religious people, went so far as to outlaw the very folk songs and dances. The most gracious and lyrical *daina* was a "sin."

Although Lithuanian books were smuggled from abroad and secreted in cemeteries and "book holes" in homes, and itinerant teachers risked their lives visiting the weary farmers, trying to rehabilitate their self-respect and inculcate the lost meaning of freedom, nothing was as successful in keeping the people spiritually alive as their old folk culture. Despite the prohibition of church and government, even in spite of their own deep religiosity, Lithuanians still sang their folk songs. A few were devoted solely to the holy song or *giesme;* but the majority accompanied even the least of their daily activities with the *daina.* They sang before and after meals. They sang at work in the fields, at funerals and weddings and the building of new houses. They prefaced the undertaking of a journey or some difficult task with the *daina.* Secretly, they gathered in barns to sing the *daina* together and dance their old folk dances. They did this not in any conscious effort to outsmart the invaders, for they had soon grown to accept their masters as an unquestionable part of this whole business of living; they sang because singing was just as much a part of that living.

The *daina* has been as intrinsic a part of Lithuania's everyday life as raising pigs and growing rye. Working and singing are inseparable activities, and this is no notion conceived by romantic historians. It can be seen in the modern Lithuanian's love of song and in the very substance of the *daina* itself. When the priest Juskevicius was collecting the *daina* several years ago, one woman sang him 300 in a row; and, within an area of some twenty square miles, he collected over 2000 different songs. One authority writing in the *Draugija* claims that over two million *dainos,* including variations, have been recorded and new ones are still being discovered. The Danish writer Age Benedictsen observes that, considered together, the folk songs make "a mighty epos of everyday life itself." This is so true that there are over thirty expressions in the language for "sing," each term designating the kind of activity for which the song is sung. The songs themselves carry along the natural rhythm and music of the activity they represent. They are so much a part of everyday life that on occasions such as weddings they form together a complete folk drama.

Consistent with its role as a daily utility, the *daina* is for the most part lyric and contains but rare and negligible references to history and old heroes. Whatever epic quality it might have had was lost in the centuries of oppression and intimidation. There is a surprising absence of rude, sensual and obscene songs so prevalent in Slavic folk literatures. Some theorists would have it that this is owing to Lithuania's intrinsic pure-heartedness; others claim religion has exiled the impure from the *daina.* Religion, however, is unknown to the *daina.* Any suggestions of Christianity are but recent additions and ring false. The *daina* has, however, many elements of old pagan beliefs and practices. Its moral purity probably owes its existence to the fact that the *daina* has been mainly the creation of women. In addition, hard work with little relaxation made extra-curricular immorality impractical.

Moreover, the substance of the *daina* constitutes a whole system of folk ethics and morals. It is so simple, natural and honest a system that it is undoubtedly responsible for the vitality of the *daina* and for the ultimate survival of Lithuania as a nation. Love is the *daina's* most popular

theme, delicately combining romantic, practical and sensuous love into a thing of beauty. It is a large and valuable love that includes not only a tenderness for family ties but produces a zestful appreciation of hard work and of the parallelism that lies between man and nature.

The Lithuanian constantly sees himself and his activities in nature. As a young lover rides through a forest of birch trees, he resembles the sun rising through a wisp of a cloud over a flax field. Or, a young girl sleeps high in the barn and deep in the bed just as willows sway high on the hill and waters sing deep below. Young men are usually compared to white clover and oak trees. Girls are white lilies and they wear wreaths of rue in their hair, symbols of purity.

Nature provides the peasant with the opportunity for honour and social recognition that every human being seeks. The Lithuanian youth never goes to war to be glorified; he goes to die. His glory lies in his plough and scythe. He is a hero who works. The girl who would live up to the peasant's ideal of womanhood must guard her rue wreath, keep a beautiful garden, spin fine linen and be capable of working in the fields. The old men and women have their personal glory and they find it in the production of good rye and carrots.

This guardianship of nature makes the peasant's home-life a stronghold in which family ties are precious possessions. Work and its achievements are his notions of true wealth. Love between man and wife survives with hard labour. They find a refreshing pleasure in homely everyday activities. The young girl prefers a poor suitor who has grown his own oxen to the lazy rich fellow who can hire his oxen but whose hands are soft and white. What, if not ploughing and spinning fine linen, will end the sorrows of the world? Who but a strong young man will make a serviceable and enduring husband? Who but a proud, industrious girl will make a wise wife?

It appears that while the Polonized church was teaching the peasant all sorts of impracticalities in the scorn of his own heritage and the horrors of his after-life, it was the folk song alone that taught him how to live as a human being from day to day. It gave him a noble and practical system

of values, without which Lithuania could hardly have survived the centuries of denationalization.

Ironically, the value of the *daina* as folk art was first recognized not by Lithuanian scholars but by their enemies. Even Lithuania's first notable poet, Duonelaitis, was too deeply influenced by religion and the 18th century school of "Season" poetry to see more in the *daina* than an unworthy and negligible folk product.

In the eighteenth century foreign scholars were so positive that Lithuania was a dying nation which would be only an historical memory in another hundred years, that they took special interest in studying her language. They observed that Lithuanian is the oldest spoken language of the Indo-European world. It is closely akin to ancient Sanskrit, but it is considered older than Sanskrit. Its relation to Latin and Greek is so marked that simple Lithuanian phrases sound like those ancient languages themselves. While a Roman would have said, "Viri, traukite jungum," for "Men, pull the yoke," — a Lithuanian says, "Virai, traukite jungan." For "God has given teeth; he will give bread," a Lithuanian says, "Dieves dave dantis, duos ir duonos"; a Greek would have said, "Zeus dedoke odontas, dosei siton." The form and spirit of Lithuanian is adapted to express the most varied shades of thought and feeling, though it may oftentimes lack terms for abstractions of late historical date. The Russian philologist Fortunatoff has pointed out that the Lithuanian language is comparable to English in its richness of words, having more than 75,000. Its value is summed up in the last words that Immanuel Kant ever published — a statement that Lithuania should be protected by the state for "her language possesses the key which solves the enigmas not only of philology but of history."

In 1745 the German pastor Ruhig published "Betrachtungen der Litauischen Sprache" and included three *dainos* with a shy apology to the German public: "Some may feel it is outrageous to think of attributing delicacy to such an uncultivated and despised language as Lithuanian." The apology was not necessary. The public reacted with enthusiasm. Lessing read the *dainos* and wrote in his "Litteraturbriefe": "The pious man apologizes for citing such trifles; in my opinion he should have apologized for not

citing more . . . precious rarities which gave me no end of delight." Herder, in his "Stimmen der Völker in Lieder," published eight translations of the *daina* wishing he had more to include. Goethe, too, found the *daina* stimulating and incorporated one in his "Singspiel," entitled "Die Fischerin." In 1825 Rhesa published a collection of 85 *dainos* with music and German translations, which were so well received that many critics suspected Rhesa of having written the songs himself. Jacob Grimm, however, praised the work and Goethe declared "another of my desires has been fulfilled."

It was only after Germany received these songs with such interest that Polish, Russian and at long last Lithuanian intellectuals began to recognize the *daina.* The Lithuanian poet Adam Mickiewicz, who wrote exclusively in Polish since writing in Lithuanian was so useless, came to use Lithuanian *dainos* and scenery in his work. Meanwhile, ignorant of this new interest in his culture, the peasant went on singing his *daina,* daily gathering from it a noble pattern of living; and the very people who for centuries had tried to annihilate all things Lithuanian were discovering precious values in those very things they tried to kill.

The translations, well received as they were by the Germans, Poles and Russians, could hardly do justice to the originals. The archaic peculiarities of Lithuanian are sometimes insurmountable. Its use of diminutives, for example, outdoes that of Spanish and Russian. Applied to the noun and adjective and sometimes the verb, the Lithuanian diminutive expresses the finest shades of meaning. It not only signifies size and affection, it conveys pride, gallantry, charm, ecstacy, submission, sarcasm and a multitude of sensibilities impossible to express by a single word in German or English. *Brolis,* or brother, can be expressed as: broliukas, brolytis, broliuks, brolytuzis, brolaitis, broliukelis, brolytukas, broluzaitis, broluzis, broluzelis, brolulis, brolelis, broluzeliukas, brolytukelis, broleliukas, brolaiteluzis, brolaituzis — and this does not end the variations possible. There are still numerous others. This superabundance of the diminutive makes rhyming in Lithuanian a very simple matter. Rhyme easily becomes a natural line climax with no awkward word-juggling, no striving for effect, no such

jingling that German rhymes like *mich* and *dich* have produced in translation. Often rhyme is absent; but then the rich alliterations of the language, its abundant use of l, t, and r, and its innumerable onomatopoeic expressions lend the unrhyming line distinction and force impossible to simulate in other languages.

Lithuanian adjectives become nouns with such facility that the doer is in one fell swoop richly coloured and dramatized. Verbs too have this flexibility, but sometimes they possess a not-to-be-borrowed meaning of their own. Feeding an adult is expressed by "valgidinti"; but feeding a child is "peneti"; feeding a pig is "liuobti", a fowl "lesinti", a horse or cow "serti", a cat or dog "lakinti"; and under no circumstances except for reasons of sarcasm can these terms be intermixed. On the other hand, there is a multitude of words that have rich connotative meanings. "Baltas", or white, the *daina's* most popular colour, can render a meaning so white that it expresses pure, dazzling, gracious and enchanting. A "white lily" is translatable enough; a "white sun" for a "dazzling sun" is less translatable; but a "white young man" can hardly suggest in English as it does in Lithuanian a dashing, hardy youth with blue eyes and blond hair, riding a powerful horse, sure of conquering an unconquerable world. "Zales", green, second favorite among the *daina's* colours, describes wide fields, new wine, sweet mint and rue; but "zales" too suggests more than colour. Its implications embrace the ideas of flourishing, freshness, richness and the deep ubiquitous aliveness of the earth of which the nature-loving Lithuanian is sensitively aware.

Such nuances of meaning and feeling, together with the rich strange music of the language, are contained in the simplest of phrasing. And when stark simplicity possesses such a subtle complexity of music, colour and thought, it creates a startling poetry. Rich as the *daina* is in poetry of this texture, its most important aspect, however, is its vitality. With its home-spun thought, it stands as more than a simple lyric of the people. It is the very quintessence of the stuff that makes men worthy of being free and gives them the impetus to become free. One cannot but wonder today how current European conquerors of small nations expect to absorb or subdue their oppressed in an era when education is

part of the life of the commonest man. If, with the assistance of centuries, of a believing people's church, and the basest ignorance, poverty and scorn, Lithuania's old enemies could not absorb her people and annihilate her small culture, what weapons save absolute physical annihilation would assist Europe's would-be conquerors in controlling people today?

★ ★ ★

LITHUANIAN FOLK SONGS

Translated by DEMIE JONAITIS

HIGH ON THE HILL AND HIGH IN THE BARN

High on the hill the willows twirled,
High on the hill the willows twirled.
Deep in the dell were waters purling;
Lulling, the waters purled.

There went a maiden walking, bright,
There went a maiden walking, bright.
Bright walked the maiden, lovely lily,
Lovely, a lily white.

Then came a young man riding there,
Then came a young man riding there.
There rode the young man, fair white clover,
Clover so white and fair.

"Maiden, my maiden, young and white,
Maiden, my maiden, young and white,
Where will you sleep, my lovely lily,
Where will you sleep tonight?"

"High in my father's barn I'll sleep,
High in my father's barn I'll sleep;
Deep in my mother's bed I'll slumber,
Motley the bed and deep."

WHISPERING TOGETHER SO

Far along the meadow
Little birches grow;
There are three atossing, toss-toss, tossing,
Whispering together so:

If I were a young man,
A ploughman on the hill,
All the sorrow, sorrow, O the whole world's sorrow
With a ploughshare I would till.

If I were a young man,
A gaily mounted lord,
All the darkness, darkness, O the whole world's darkness
Would be lightened by my sword.

Far along the meadow
Little lindens grow;
There are three atossing, toss-toss, tossing,
Whispering together so:

If I were a young lass,
My mother I would leave
And the sorrow, sorrow, O the whole world's sorrow
Into linens fine I'd weave.

THE STORM

Side by side, those two young fisherlads
Ran away from Rusnes town,
Until into the Niemen they must cast
Their slender nets adown, adown.

But raging rose the Billow God to see,
And blasting down the winds now spin.
"O friend, O friend, my own true friend,
Throw the golden anchor in."

"O friend, O friend, my own true friend,
Climb the mast and climb it high,
Until you see the dunes against the hill
And slender pines against the sky."

"I find no dunes, my friend, I find no hill,
No slender pines afar I view,
But I can see a lovely girl, still
Within a garden green with rue."

PEONY

Peony is verdant,
Comely does it grow.
Green the peony is shining,
Red its blossoms glow.

Low I bent the blossoms,
Plucked them from the air,
Comely peony in blossom
Wove I through my hair.

Through the cherry orchard
Past the manse above,
Walked I through the cherry orchard,
Chanced to meet my love.

Youthful is my loved one,
Comely, too, is he;
Kindling are his cheeks like blossoms
Of the peony.

O THE CAROLING

O the caroling of the maidens,
O the greenness of their rue;
Sing, maidens, sing,
Green is your rue.

O the caroling of the young men,
O the whinnying of their steeds;
Sing, young men, sing,
Swift are your steeds.

O the caroling of old women,
O their carrots growing green;

Sing, old women, sing,
Your carrots are green.

O the caroling of the old men,
O the greenness of their rye;
Sing, old men, sing,
Green is your rye.

THE TWO LOVES

What were you dreaming,
My lovely maid,
To take for your lover
A penniless blade?

A rich love was standing
Close to my side,
His cheeks were like thistle,
Thorny and pied.

A poor love was standing
With a harrow below,
His cheeks were aglowing,
Aglowing, aglow.

The lands of my rich love
Are wide and untilled;
Scant are my poor love's,
But harrowed and filled.

My rich love has oxen
He hires with pelf;
One has my poor love,
He reared it himself.

THE DRY PINE

Past summer woods
The falcon springs;
On the dry pine
He beats his wings.

He:
Look, lovely girl,
At the dry pine;
When it turns green,
You will turn mine.

She:
The weary pine
Is green again,
Where has he gone
Who loved me then?

Perhaps he's found
Past plough and seas
Maids who smile,
Maids who please.

(Not past the seas,
Nor past the plough,
No other maids
Does he love now.)

He:
Were I a dove,
Could I take flight,
I'd wing to her
Each dawn and night.

Her dreams I'd stir
When morning's blue,
And lull her sleep
The whole night through.

THE TWO SISTERS

Softly, softly
Flow the Niemen's waters,
Still more softly
Talk the little daughters:

Long I've listened
To my little mother,
Long I've listened
To my little old one.

She'll have me marry
(A young lass to a young man);
She'll have me marry
(A young lass to an old man).

One Daughter:
An old man, old man,
I'll marry him and hide him,
For three days, three days
In blackest smoke I'll hide him.

For three days, three days
In smoke he'll meet this daughter;
The fourth day, fourth day,
He'll drink her washing water.

And O I shall give him
Work without ease:
To toss a tiny pebble
Beyond the sea of seas.

The Other Daughter:
A young man, young man,
With all my love I'll meet him;
For three days, three days
With gentle words I'll greet him.

For three days, three days
With gentle words I'll greet him;
The fourth day, fourth day
With good red wine I'll meet him.

And O I shall give him
Work soft as loam:
To push a tiny pebble
Down a high hill home.

THREE POEMS

By CARRIE C. TAYLOR

SHADOW TIME

Evening time and shadow time,
Star time and rest;
Dear Lord, of all times,
This I love best.

Sun gone out of sight,
Stillness over all,
Out of the gathering darkness,
Comes the night bird's call.

Long shadows across the sky,
Birds in their nest;
Clouds lined with red and gold,
Drifting on the west.

Evening time and shadow time;
Night time and rest;
Dear Lord, of all times,
This I love best.

MUSIC OF THE DARK PINES

Dark pines bending 'neath the morning sky,
Whispering together in the dawning gray,
What are you murmuring, what are you saying,
Whispering together in the early day?
"Dear Lord of the dark pines,
Lord of the forest,
Hear Thou our hymn of praise,
Morning, noon, and night."

Blue sky above them; high noon still finds them,
Murmuring together, music soft and low;
What are they saying, sighing so softly,
Murmuring together in the noontide glow?
"Dear God of the dark pines,
Lord of the forest,
Hear Thou our hymn of praise,
Morning, noon, and night."

Starlight and moonlight gleaming upon them,
Deep shadows creeping, elfin like and long,
Tones softer, sweeter, mingling together,
Bowing heads in reverence, prayer, and even song.
"Dear God of the dark pines,
Lord of the forest,
Hear Thou our hymn of praise,
Morning, noon, and night."

SNOWING

Blue sky above you,
Clouds floating low,
Violets and daffodils,
Everywhere you go.
The sweet south wind is blowing,
But it's snowing, snowing, snowing,
Snowing cherry blossoms everywhere.

Little blue bird singing
A love song to his mate,
Lilacs white and purple
Blooming by the gate.
The warm west wind is blowing,
But it's snowing, snowing, snowing,
Snowing apple blossoms everywhere.

RETREAT

Small cottage, facing the sea,
Place of "Dreams Come True" for me.
This my haven, my heaven, too;
Small cottage, facing the sea.

— *Edith Lawrence*

YOUNG VIENNA

By SOL LIPTZIN

Young Vienna is now a legend. This literary group came to the fore in the closing decade of the last century. It dominated Austrian letters until the outbreak of the First World War. It cast a golden glow upon a dying metropolis, that had ceased to be the political capital of a vast empire but that was still the cultural heart of the Danubian peoples. It met its end in 1938. Its last survivor, Richard Beer-Hofmann, found refuge on American soil.

Hermann Bahr recorded in his diary on New Year's Day, 1921, that thirty years earlier he had arrived in Vienna after a sojourn in the leading European literary centres and that he had discovered there a group of sympathetic young writers, whose attitude resembled his own and whose fame he determined to spread. "The available material consisted of a young physician, Dr. Arthur Schnitzler; a person famed about town because of the splendor of his neckties, Dr. Richard Beer-Hofmann; and a high school youth who wrote under the name Loris, Hugo von Hofmannsthal."

This group formed the nucleus of *Young Vienna.* Soon there were associated with it, more or less intimately, Peter Altenberg, Felix Salten, Leopold Adrian, Felix Dörmann, and Theodor Herzl. Its influence extended to Rainer Maria Rilke, Stefan Zweig, and Jacob Wassermann.

In lyrics of sweet weariness, in tales of sad disillusionment, in playlets overladen with the fruit of contemplation, these aesthetes wrote of pleasures that palled, of comedies that ended tragically, of reality that bordered on dreamland, of love with its ecstasy and sorrow, of age with its loneliness and silence, and of Death — the ever present guest at the banquet of life. Their longing for gaiety, frivolity, and irresponsibility alternated with their desire to serve, to suffer, and to shoulder responsibilities. Though they nipped at every passing pleasure, they sensed in their heart of hearts that pleasure was no goal but rather led deeper into slavery. Though they worshipped beauty and adored art, they were painfully aware that a life of beauty impoverished and that

too much devotion to art sapped all vital energy. As a result, a heavy pall of melancholy overhung their lightest verses and a hypersensitive conscience gave the lie to their amoral pretensions.

Their works circle about eternal problems, yet nowhere do they make the pompous claim that they have found a single important problem. It is true that they are incapable of embracing enthusiastically any slogan or of devoting their all to any party. On the other hand, they are equally incapable of condemning, hating, or liquidating opponents and foes. They know too much. Their insight into life's labyrinthean depths makes them hesitate constantly and robs them of quick decisions and dynamic action. Their awareness that all human beings are but super-marionettes, impelled by the inscrutable supreme puppet-player of the universe, renders them far too tolerant. They have no joy in vengeance, no endurance in anger, no desire for martyrdom. They bow their heads before every passing storm. They accept wars and revolutions as natural cataclysms, against which resistance is vain. They do not mock the sinner nor praise the noble spirit, for in their eyes all judgments are folly and all punishments absurd. Human delusions and superstitions, emotions and relations, visions and ideals ebb and flow, have their moments of triumph and pass away.

As thinkers, they are determinists, but, as poets, they are believers in free will. They hold that eternal laws rule the rippling of waves, the growth of grass, the flight of birds, the streaming of thoughts within the mind of man. They recognize, however, that acceptance of pure determinism means abandoning all our ethical concepts of guilt and atonement, sin and virtue, and even such distinctions as important and unimportant. It means substituting for all of these values a mere causal relationship between happenings. Responsibility would thus be completely negated, love and hate would be rendered impossible, rewards and punishments would be banned, admiration and deprecation would be outmoded, forgiveness and vengeance would be dispensed with, pride and shame would be eliminated, the whole world would be hopelessly boring. Instead of a fascinating stage for tragedies and comedies, performed by individuals, this globe would forever be the scene of a stupid, tiresome farce

enacted between blind impulses which happened to be incorporated in this man or that woman. To escape from such deadening monotony, we would have to invent the concept of free will. We would need it on aesthetic grounds and as a safety valve against the despotic pressure of pure causality.

The poets of *Young Vienna* are rationalists. They insist on subjecting all generalizations to the test of logic and experience. It is true that they recognize the limitations of reason, its inability to shape society in its image or to answer adequately man's fundamental questions. But they refuse to extinguish its modest candle, though this candle shed only a little light in the infinite darkness about us, — since, after all, we possess no surer source of spiritual illumination. They feel that our grief in not being lords of the lightning should not make us throw away our sole guide through the unknown, pale and glimmering though this guide may be. They prefer clarity to profundity and the honest weapons of logic to the poisonous arrows of mysticism.

The Viennese aesthetes are not pessimists, for they do not lament that this world is fundamentally tragic and that pain and sorrow dominate it. Nor are they optimists, since they do not assure the inevitability of progress or man's unceasing growth in wisdom, morality, and joy. They are not faithful observers of established religious sects. Nor are they unbelievers, even if they continually question God's acts. In their opinion, the sceptic is nearer to God than the orthodox believer, because the sceptic's thoughts constantly circle about God, questioning him, doubting him, raging at him, demanding an answer of him, — while the faithful adherents of ancient creeds take the status quo for granted as an inevitable product of divine design and do not feel the need of justifying ever anew God's ways.

Hermann Bahr prided himself on being the discoverer, if not the founder of *Young Vienna.* He was undoubtedly the most productive member of the group, excelling in drama, fiction, and criticism. His sophisticated comedy, *The Concert,* which appeared in 1909, won him an American audience, but his witty, delicate short stories still await the hand of an English translator. He ranked as the finest Impressionistic critic of Central Europe. His acclaim of a new idea won for it wide circulation. His enthusiasm for a new movement

assured its momentary dominance. He himself, however, did not remain long the adherent of any single cause. As a disciple of Maurice Barrés and Ernst Mach, he opposed German Naturalism in the heyday of its power and, as early as 1891, published a critical volume under the challenging title *Beyond Naturalism* (Die Uberwindung des Naturalismus). When at a later date neo-Romantic tendencies prevailed, he heralded the dawn of Expressionism. Forever unstable in his convictions and consistent only in his inconsistencies, he consciously avoided penetrating into bottomless depths and, by preference, stayed on the surface, content to mirror the superficial currents of his age. The multiplicity of the ever changing phenomena fascinated him. It sufficed him to be acquainted with the latest expressions of the European soul between the Volga and the Loire, the Thames and the Guadalquivir, and to tell his readers of his reactions, likes, and dislikes. Holding that today's truth is tomorrow's platitude and an outmoded superstition on the day after tomorrow, he sought to be always a step ahead of his contemporaries and generally succeeded in this endeavor — as long as he lived. Time has, however, taken its toll of him and the pioneer of yesteryear is now, in the main, merely source material for the cultural historian.

Arthur Schnitzler, the oldest member of the group, was a physician by training and a healer of sick souls by inclination. He began by practicing the profession of medicine, became interested in psychotherapy, and ended as a literary psychologist. The influence of his early calling is reflected in his novels and dramas. His wisest comments are generally put in the mouths of physicians. They are his raisonneurs. Illness is a favorite theme with him and the consciousness of death constantly haunts his characters. Indeed, the call of life sounds so alluring to them, because they envisage so vividly their inevitable end. They never forge ambitious plans that require decades to mature, but rather seek to experience the fast fleeting moments so intensely that nothing is left for future hours. They do not submit to present aches and anxieties for the sake of remote joys that may never materialize. They do not strive for fame or wealth or power. They eschew grandiloquence. They float on in a continuous intoxication of tenderness and mild

passion, adding a little aroma, charm, and friendliness to the bleakest atmosphere.

Anatol is the earliest of Schnitzler's famous characters. He is the hero of playlets which appeared in 1889 and 1890. He is youth with its faults, its glamor, its sentimentalism. He appears frivolous simply because he tries to avoid troublesome cares. He appears faithless only because he is so faithful to every new experience that he does not wish to be burdened with the yoke of every former experience. He may be likened to a caressing spring wind or to a butterfly that sips at the chalices of flowers. He is least melancholy when he merely nips at wine, and love, and beauty. The sky must not be too blue. The birds must not sing too lustily. The sweet maidens must not be too passionate. Perfect poise and ease are desirable under all circumstances.

In the Anatol playlets, woman is seen through the eyes of philandering young men, to whom she is merely a source of adventure and delight, a being to be looked down upon with a mocking smile, a plaything to be entertained with kisses, caresses, and honeyed words. In *Fairy Tale* (1891) and in *Light o' Love* (1894), Schnitzler presents the game of love as it is viewed by women. Then it assumes a more serious aspect. It becomes laden with deepest tragedy. These plays foreshadow the mature Schnitzler, the author of *The Lonely Way* (1903) and of *The Vast Domain* (1909).

The dramatist, who at the close of the last century set out in quest of new morals, ends with a realization of the inadequacy of all moral systems, old and new. He sees the soul as a vast domain that can never be entirely charted. "There is room for so much in us at the same time! Love and treachery, faith and faithlessness, adoration of one person and longing for another or for several others. We try to bring order into ourselves as best as we can; but this order is, after all, something artificial. Our natural state is chaos. Yes, the soul is a vast domain." Innumerable psychic streams course through every one of us. Sometimes these seethe and rise, overflow and wreak havoc. Often there is very little that we can do to prevent a catastrophe. But let us at least carefully examine the factors involved, let us avoid dogmatic generalizations, let us not resort to such obsolete expressions as sin, vice, or guilt, let us realize that there are

no panaceas for life's ills. Every human being is unique. Hence every relationship between human beings is a unique relationship. It must be studied thoroughly and diagnosed accurately in all its complexities before a specific cure can be prescribed. The medicine that heals in one case may act as poison that kills in another. Schnitzler's answers to various problems are offered by him merely as possibilities and not as final solutions. Indeed, he often succumbs to the temptation of satirizing good-naturedly in one work the very opinions that his hero or heroine fervently defended in another work.

The one theme running through all his plays and novels, the one idea ever in his mind is that some people are alive while countless others are reposing under the sod. He, therefore, begs those who live on to cease moaning and to avoid darkening with cares their all too few days on earth. A single pure ray of sunlight, a single breath of air is worth more than the pale, mythical drink of immortality. Speaking through the mask of the poet Sylvester Thorn in *The Walk to the Pond* (1927), he tells us that a person who has not been sated with experience will gladly sell the ecstatic singing of a thousand angelic choirs for a single human sound. The touch of a friend's hand, a May morning, a cup of wine, a melody, the fragrance of a flower, the glance of a faithful dog — the many trifles that we hardly notice as long as we dwell in the realm of light—outweigh by far the tears of unceasing lamentation which trickle into an unfeeling, mute grave; they mean far more than the golden inscription on the marble tomb beneath which the body of the eulogized deceased rots, far more than immortality — the lie of lies, far more than the deepest gratitude of coming worlds, far more than the fervent understanding of generations still unborn.

Similar sentiments were expressed by Hugo von Hofmannsthal, the purest Impressionist in German letters. Melancholy, that enveloped the aging Schnitzler, cast its deep shadow upon his younger contemporary at too early an age. Hofmannsthal, who was born in 1874, was already overripe at seventeen, when he wrote his lyrical playlet *Yesterday*. He became mute with the excess of knowledge, after writing the tender masterpieces, *Death of Titian* at eighteen, and

Death and the Fool at nineteen. The youthful poet longed to escape from overmuch contemplation and could not. He yearned for life with its banality and mediocrity, but was kept at a distance from it by his excessive sensitiveness. He sang in melodious verses of the sweet intoxication of death and decline, the glamorous fascination of the moment, and the transitoriness of all striving and achievement. He was burdened with too many historical and literary reminiscences and utterly incapable of naive, natural reactions to experience. The recognition came to him that all speech was based on an indecent overevaluation of one's importance and that, if human beings knew how insignificant they really were, no one would ever open his mouth. He saw his fellow-mortals laboriously building cities, founding empires, and then destroying their proud structures in senseless wars, and he ranked his species with the ants and the moles.

In the mask of one of his heroes, Lord Chandos, Hofmannsthal explained how ever increasing scepticism and the growth of his analytical mind paralyzed his creative powers; how the words we ordinarily use gradually lost their last vestige of meaning upon too close scrutiny; how finally it became impossible for him to speak coherently on any subject. He felt a physical aversion, if he had to utter or even to listen to abstract terms or general propositions. He could express no opinion on any personal or public matter, because every conclusion appeared upon microscopic analysis to be full of fictitious assumptions and devoid of a solid foundation. In order to escape abysmal loneliness and artistic sterility, Hofmannsthal fled to the literary masters of the past and occupied himself with the revision and adaptation of Greek, English, and Spanish dramas. Some of these were magnificently staged by Max Reinhardt at the Salzburg Festivals. Others supplied Richard Strauss with texts for operas. *Elektra* (1911), based upon Sophocles, and *Egyptian Helen* (1928), based upon Euripides, were often sung on this continent. But perhaps the most popular opera, upon which Hofmannsthal and Strauss collaborated, was *Der Rosenkavalier* (1911).

Richard Beer-Hofmann is the least known of the Viennese group, probably because he was least prolific. Not until his seventy-fifth year in 1941 did he publish a slender volume

containing all his lyric production that he cared to see preserved. This volume included his *Lullaby for Miriam,* which Hermann Bahr, a generation ago, acclaimed as the finest lyric since Goethe. Its four exquisite stanzas touch eternal chords. A father chants at the cradle of his daughter, while the sun sets behind distant hills. The twilight mood leads him to reflect upon the eternal succession of light and shade, dawn and dusk. He ponders on the dark origin of life and its unknown end, the blind path that we tread throughout our days and our absolute loneliness here below, the impossibility of communicating our deepest experiences even to those nearest and dearest to us, and the tragic necessity of each generation recapitulating the past with all its errors and all its suffering. Yet somehow behind the apparent chaotic structure of the universe, the poet divines a mysterious purpose and a definite continuity of existence. "We are but banks of a river and deep in us flows blood of the past streaming on to the future, blood of our ancestors full of unrest and pride. All our ancestors are in us. Who can feel himself alone?" Even as each cell is a necessary part of an organ and even as each organ has a specialized useful function to perform in the entire organism, so too each individual is a necessary link in an historical community of fate — an expression which Beer-Hofmann prefers to the more publicized ones of race, people, or nation — and each community of fate has a specific way of life and a definite useful task to perform on this globe in man's ascent to an ever higher level of culture.

In the poet's only novel, *The Death of George* (1900), this realization comes to the hero as, in the presence of death, he broods on the meaning of life, and wrests him from his self-centered existence as an aesthetic epicurean, and whirls him into the midst of his people's struggle for justice.

In *The Count of Charolais* (1904), Beer-Hofmann's first play, the hero, who sees the brittleness of all human relations and the instability of all human emotions, retains to the end his unshakable faith in the bonds linking parents to children and children to parents. This continuity of experience down the generations remains, even though all else fails. Our psychic configuration is molded by the past of

our ethnic kind and it, in turn, determines the way of life to be lived by our remotest descendants.

Beer-Hofmann is of Jewish origin and his approach to eternal problems is essentially biblical. His thoughts are ever directed towards God and his visions are reminiscent of the prophets of the Old Testament. He devoted the past half century to a biblical trilogy, which is still uncompleted, a trilogy that seeks to restate for modern man the Hebraic position on fundamental questions. The first part, entitled *Jacob's Dream* (1918), depicts the inner crisis of Jacob, the mythical ancestor of the Jews, during the memorable night at Beth-El, when he accepts for himself and his offspring the blessing and the burden of the blessing offered him by God.

In a magnificent poetic vision, the Archangel Michael reveals to Jacob the future of his people, who will be the bearers of God's moral code to all the nations. Samael, the angel of darkness and the symbol of negation, warns Jacob against accepting this destiny: "It is true that others will bow to your testimony, but they'll beat the mouth bloody that pronounced it. It is true that you may wander eternally. But rest? Never! And home? A word without meaning for you! Yours will be a people from which all fetch booty. To sin against you? Whom is it not permitted? . . . Every people to which you attach yourself will burn you out like a cancer. You, the beloved of God, will be hated more than a poisonous plant or a mad beast! . . . You fool, chosen to be God's whipping-post! . . . He sacrifices you. He needs you as an unbribable witness to whom he can point. Who will doubt, if you, bleeding and downtrodden, still praise him as a just God!" Despite Samael's warning, Jacob accepts his destiny with all its blessing and all its horror.

In the second part of the religious trilogy, entitled *Young David,* Beer-Hofmann continues the same theme. The testing of David is no less severe than that of his ancestor Jacob. Reeling under unwanted pomp and saddened by too much insight, he finally ascends the throne and assumes the burden of a leader in Israel. In this play, completed early in 1933, shortly before Hitler's rise to power, Beer-Hofmann gives the Hebraic answer to Nazi claims to national arrogance and racial superiority. "Es lohnt nicht!" — just as it does not pay for an individual to live solely for himself, so

too it does not pay for a people to think primarily in terms of its own aggrandizement. An individual is valuable only to the extent of his contribution to the well-being of other individuals. A people is important only insofar as it confers its creative gifts upon others, subordinating its own welfare to that of humanity-at-large. Deprived of this constructive urge, a person is but dung of the earth and a people but dust of history.

Beer-Hofmann's faith in the meaningfulness of all happenings runs through all his works from his stories of the early Eighteen-Nineties to his dream-reproductions of 1941. The patrician of Vienna, now an exile in New York, is undaunted in his affirmation of a supreme purpose underlying all events.

Young Vienna — or shall we rename it *Old Vienna* — is now a legend. It is a legend even to the Viennese. As Napoleon put an end to the Venice of Gozzi and Goldoni, so a modern conqueror ended the glory of Vienna. The Mistress of the Adriatic knew a thousand years of splendor and is today a museum of memories and faded dreams. The Queen of the Danube seems fated for a similar destiny. On the other hand, it may chance that to the gaze of a future historian pre-Hitler Vienna will appear as the last and mellowest synthesis on the European continent of the two cultural streams that long ago arose in Hellas and Judea and that for many centuries gave to the Occident its pattern of beauty and its ideal of goodness. This pattern of beauty was shaped by Homer and Euripides, Plato and the Renaissance. This ideal of goodness was proclaimed by Isaiah and Jesus, by Judaism and Christianity. The armored men of the North, who parade along the banks of the Danube, seem immune to these influences. They worship other gods and follow other faiths. They are said to be more virile and they claim to die better. They are not plagued by beauty nor weighed down by morals. Their tanks scale Parnassus and their winged monsters threaten Sinai. The Swastika flies over Olympus and the cultural splendor that was Danubian and European has gone into exile. America harbors the last of the Viennese visionaries.

TWO POEMS

By WALTER G. ARNOLD*

INTERROGATION

Why must a man who loves his country well,
Who has for her an honest reverence,
Who stands without a qualm, ready to sell
His dear life's blood for her continuance,
Who puts in her all his implicit trust,
Then asks no more of her for loyalty
Than that she treat him not as worthless dust
But like a man in a democracy —

Why must a man with all these qualities,
The kind of traits which everyone must prize,
Who's hailed by other nationalities
For his true worth, be in his nation's eyes
Seen always as a loyal colored man
And never as a true American?

ENTREATY

Thou who gave Homer for his lack of sight
A gift of song such as no other knew,
Who gave Beethoven, who was deaf, the might
To write great music as none else can do;
O great Creator, who throughout the years
Has compensated those who were in need,
Hear me as now I come to Thee in tears,
And to this humble prayer of mine give heed —

Grant me, O God, for all the things that I
Will never know except as dreams, because
Thou mad'st me black, the sight to see just why
Things must be thus. Then this dull pain that gnaws
My heart because of all I am denied
At last will cease, and I'll be satisfied.

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*The author writes:

"I am a young Negro poet, a student of the University of Pennsylvania. My poems have appeared in all of the leading publications."

THREE POEMS

By ELEANOR VINTON MURRAY

FINALITY

Once, as I knelt beside you in the night,
And looked upon your face all cold and white,
Where flickering tapers scarcely pierced the gloom
That hung like curtains in your silent room,
I thought you listened, waiting, for a word
And once it seemed as though your pulses stirred.
A strange, delirious hope enveloped me
That I could reach you then and set you free.

It died still-born, for you were dead, my own,
And I beside you lost in space, alone.
Then the enfolding horror of despair
Made my heart break, as you lay quiet there,
Where flickering tapers could not pierce the gloom
That hung like curtains in the silent room.

REUNION

Who comes to me when the young moon is clear
And walks beside me? Is it you, my dear?
Is it your hand that softly clasps my own
As in more happy days that we have known?
Can you more truly read me now than then,
Have thoughts not spoken come within your ken?
If this be so then it is better now,
For Death a deeper insight can allow.
Death who so sharply tears our closest bands
By this new light in friendly semblance stands;
The veil that, somehow, always came between
Dissolves and so our inner selves are seen.
How strange a thing if that much dreaded Death
Should bring us nearer than our living breath!

MENE, MENE, TEKEL UPHARSIN

The child cries out who wakes to find the dark,
Nerves, strung to tautness, quiver at a sound
That has no cause and on our eyelids press
Dreams of a cowering throng that must embark
For distant shores where menaces confound,
Where joy of life is darkened by distress.

These things, they say, are all a mortal blight
Bred in the murk of sick and timorous souls
Who, being so, can never understand
How sane our world is and how full of light
On paths that lead to many happy goals,
Our heritage a smiling, pleasant land.

Wiser, we know that these are ominous dreams.
Nature arranges in this gradual way
To dull the impact of a blow unknown,
When the hour strikes and now each moment seems
To make more dire the fast approaching day
When all the future's horror will be shown.

OF ONE MOST BEAUTIFUL

By RICHARD BURDICK ELDRIDGE

Describe her? Try to catch in words
The soaring rapture of the birds!
A hopeless task. What words can trace
The utter beauty of her face?
A candle burning in the dark,
An arrow flying to its mark,
A slender tree against the sky,
A cloud at evening drifting by,
The pattern of a perfect rose —
All these my thoughts of her disclose;
And like a star that fills the night
Her beauty is my heart's delight.
Yet with all this one can but guess
Her soul's surpassing loveliness!

SONGS OF THE GITANOS

A Group of Translations

By CHRISTINE TURNER CURTIS*

VELVET EYES

On the black and silver book of the skies
Do prophets pore when the hour grows late,
But in the glance of your gypsy eyes
I read my fate:
I read my fate.

For that intense and eloquent gaze
Is dark as sorrow and deep as my sin;
And velvet-black as the sea-fed pools
When night comes in:
When night comes in.

After the Spanish

THE NECKLACE

I pray you, niña bonita,
When you weep in the night hours small,
Spread down a linen kerchief
Wherein your precious tears may fall.

I will take them to Granada,
Where the snuff-brown city rears,
A silversmith I'll find there
And show him all your precious tears.

He will take the tears of my niña,
He will string them like drops of rain,
And fashion her a necklace
Of crystals on a silver chain.

After the Spanish

*TRANSLATOR'S NOTE

The **Songs of the Gitanos** are gypsy folk-songs with no known author. They were in the popular form of **coplas** or quatrains, and I expanded the idea in each case to make several verses. The one from the German was the only song which was not in this **copla** form, but contained eight lines. As these **coplas** were packed with idea and feeling like capsules, I felt I was not taking too much licence in loosening them up by making of them several verses.

THE RAIN COMES DOWN

The rain comes down; the rain falls fast:
My gypsy, my gypsy, where hast thou fled?
Where dost thou lay that raven head
When the bare boughs rock in the bitter blast?

Before the blaze I sit at home.
The crimson embers fall and gleam,
My gypsy, my gypsy, by what cold stream,
Through what wild valleys dost thou roam?

In the rosy coals I see thy face —
The smoky glow of thy burning eyes,
The flame of thy cheek when summer skies
Hung over us, and the woodland lace.

The northwind howls; the hailstones beat.
My gypsy, my gypsy, through what dark lanes —
What pastures flayed by the autumn rains
Dost thou hasten to on thy slim brown feet?

After the French

THE FIDDLER

A gypsy fiddler has woven a spell;
Bewitched my ears and my heart as well:
Wherever he fiddles in city or town,
When he takes his bow in his fingers brown,
Down every cheek the hot tears run.
There's none to resist him, no, not one.
He draws it once; he draws it twice;
The veins of the listeners melt like ice.

When I hear he's come to a distant town,
I hasten like mad over hill and down,
I ask for him here: I hunt for him there;
But I find my gypsy, nowhere, nowhere.
Only his melodies, sweet and thinned,
Come floating back on the evening wind;
Like smoke-rings over the meadows curled:
And I am alone in an empty world.

After the German

FERNAN SILVA VALDES, URUGUAYAN NATIVIST

By WILLIS KNAPP JONES

In 1913, a young poet of Montevideo, Uruguay, published a volume *Anforas de Barro* (Clay Wins), full of the typical pretty poetry which so many young poets of the continent, with imagination fixed on Paris, were producing. Though the author, as a boy, spent many months in the "camp" among the gauchos, and even, at the age of fifteen was composing creole poetry, yet he continued following fashions of modernism, made popular by Ruben Dario, in his earlier stages. The ivory tower and formal nature still symbolized the real poetic.

In 1917 Silva Valdes celebrated his thirtieth birthday by another volume, *Humo de incienso* (Smoke of Incense). The critics spoke of its "artificial cerebralism."

When Fernan Silva Valdes came back physically and mentally from Paris to the rural region of his native Uruguay, his book *Agua del tiempo* which appeared in 1921 marked, in the opinion of the critic Victor Perez Petit, the "New Testament of a Continent," Memendez y Pelayo saw Hispanic American poetry merely as a branch of Spanish poetry, but *Agua del tiempo* provided a break. It ran through six editions. Then appeared *Espinillo* to show that Uruguay had a national poet.

These two collections of verse were very different from the sort of dilettante criollism of previous poets who thought it fashionable to write about gauchos. This was no erudite poet condescending to write about a picturesque lower class. Silva Valdes had lived among the cowboys. The verses of this tall thin man with thick glasses and deep voice were filled with authentic local color and with a genuine feeling for the pampas of the River Plate and their inhabitants. He showed that rustic poetry need not be illiterate, but could be an aesthetic masterpiece.

According to his creed, as expressed by Perez Petit, even in the most common and simple things exists a spark of light,

a particle of loveliness. He saw beauty in the crude gaucho, and, better yet, by simple words, strikingly free from an avalanche of adjectives, he makes his readers sense that beauty.

He became the leader of a new school of Nativist poets, his ideas exemplified in *Poemas Nativos* which appeared in 1925. The compositions were inspired by the beauty of the country, subjectively interpreted. With Silva Valdes, the image predominates over ideas or feelings, however, as in the poetry of that other interpreter of America, the Peruvian Santos Chocano. The Uruguayan's poetry differs, however, in that the meter is more irregular and less closely rhymed.

The chief flaw of Nativism is its lack of spiritual universality. It deals with types, thoughts, and reactions of the soil of its origin, and cannot, perhaps, be appreciated elsewhere. Yet in this phase of his writing, critics called him the national poet of Uruguay. His famous fellow countrywoman, Juana Ibarbourou, was hailed as "Juana of America."

Silva Valdes, who had earlier abandoned modernism when he realized his forte lay in interpreting another sort of modernity, saw the weakness of his second phase, and has now progressed in a third phase of evolution which has made him one of the unquestionably great poets of Spanish America.

As his countryman, the greatest of South American dramatists, Florencio Sanchez, indicated in his play *La Grenga* (The Foreigner), the hope of the continent lies in the fusion of native and foreign elements, so Silva Valdes' collection *Intemperie* (Stormy Weather) is a mingling of "poemas gringos" distinguished for ideas, and "poemas nativos" dealing more with images. European and native elements are most happily fused in one poem from that volume, "Capitan de mis sombras," perhaps the finest work of this important Spanish American poet.

Recently another interest has made itself shown. His most recent volume, *Romancero del sur* (Southern Ballad Collection) (1938) shows his ability to permeate the Spanish ballad with New World atmosphere.

From his Nativist period two poems have been translated with an attempt to reproduce both meter and rhyme,

though in a letter to the translator the author declared that they were in "irregular meter" and any poem that expressed their ideas would satisfy him.
(*The following translations are by the author of this article.*)

THE INDIAN

He came
Who knows from where
With headband like a benteveo bird
And cardinal's feather in his hair.

Little he knew of native land, although he loved his home.
The Spaniards found him rooted deep
Fishing in rivers, hunting in forests, ranging wide.

His ringing war cry served to keep
Eternal obstacles, eternal checks between them and
The vast horizon's sweep.

Molded in clay of stubbornness his slim, sly body passed
Swift as a naked shadow, ever on the run,
Along his well-known hillside steeps,
Its color, copper fused with red; its brawn surpassed by none.
At noise of war, his sharpened instincts tensed,
And in his veins, instead of blood, ran liquid sun.

Instinctive slave of beauty he;
Upon his face he traced a mass of brilliant hues, none pale.
His plumed war bonnet made him no more Indian,
Yet more of color made him more the male.

Master of all the region,
Over trifling hunting quarrel with some neighboring chief
He'd brandish in the wind his courage, keen-edged as a sword;
Like Uruguayan trees, he, too, was tough, — trunk, stem, and leaf,
Within, without; his only softness was his uttered word.
The heart of him, as in the hardiest pitanga tree,
A sweet and trembling flower seemed to be.

How often his canoe would cut the streams;
One was he with the wildest animal
As he would roam for months on end,
Lured by the never-reached horizon's call, —
His copper hide tanned by the elements;
Reddened by sun or soaked by rainy splash, —
Through those hot drowsy days when locusts chirp,
Or through the long nights bright with lightning's flash.

The Spanish conquest checked his wanderings,
And tribes who used to roam through various routes
Came clustering in a bunch about a chief
Going 'round together, boleadora-like.*

He had no skill at laughter or at tears;
The puma-bellow at the killing was his only cry,
And when his end came, he passed on without a sound,
His feathers trembling, dying as the wild birds die.

THE GAUCHO TROUBADOUR

I. *Evocation*

Troubadour, with your mane like the Nazarene,
Poet of the desert vast,
Not yet is paint or stone your glory to immortalize.
In your progress through the centuries, you've reached
America at last:
Your race first saw the light in far Provence
And in the Pampas finally closed its eyes.

II. *North*

Lord of the four-fold compass points,
Adventure-loving, free of habitat,
You used to wander aimlessly,
Yet one by one all routes would finally sweep
Beneath the wide brim of your ragged hat.

Simple indeed your compass was.
Whatever way you'd face

*Boleadores are the Argentine hunting weapons, two or three stones fastened together by thongs. When thrown, they wrap around the legs of the prey and bring it down.

That way was north, your goal and your design.
The only fence in all the encircling space
Was the cloud-rimmed horizon line.

III. *Sowing*

You lived by chance; luck good and bad you found;
Like seeds that fall outside the furrowed bed,
Your germ of happiness, when it lay quietly in fertile ground,
Would shoot up and become a tree
And fill the countryside with music and festivity
As the ombu of the River Plate casts its wide-spreading limbs
Over a whole vineyard for all men to see.

IV. *Like the Birds*

You did not need much urging to display your art:
A drink, a rival (if he sang well, you'd rejoice).
As birds have songs bubbling in their throats,
You used to have your verses ready in your voice.

V. *The Guitar*

Your guitar in your arms was like a daughter,
Tiny and motherless,
And you would croon to it so drowsily.
Your guitar in your arms was like a mother
Whose milk, seeping through warm arteries,
Has come even to me!

VI. *Singing*

Your hat, pushed back with pride upon your head,
Pulled tight against your jaw its leather thong
And where your beard against your moustache pressed,
Each time you raised your voice in song
Your lips peeped out like a cardinal in its nest.
The whitened skull of cattle used to serve you as a throne,
Or if you'd rise above the earth, a counter was your seat;
An unsophisticated audience squatting on its heels
Would sit around you solemnly in speechlessness complete.
Though from the hitching posts outside
A chorus of bridle rings was your accompaniment,
With the metallic tinkle of their beat.

VII. *Man*

With wisdom of the elders and youth's keen intuition
Sometimes your bad side swayed the scales, sometimes your bad you'd smother.
Yet you were checked where'er you turned, no matter your positions,
For white men blocked you on one side, and Indians on the other.
Since luck, when bad, is wont to increase years a hundredfold
Though once-black hair be streaked with grey, your age one can't surmise.
Child of reverses, tell me how it is that you could be so rough?
Child of good fortune, how is it that you could be so wise?
In the tips of your slim fingers and the thin edge of your lips,
The hair line of your genius shows, your charming humor lies.
Your chief delights were danger, chance, and women you would find,
And when the Devil nudged your elbow or kept at your side,
A thousand witches saw you pass the farm and swiftly ride, --
Your saddle studs aglint with moonlight, and a woman on behind.

VIII.

No matter where you sang, trailed merriment a-wing.
You used to pass, with festive gayness at your back
And afterward lay silence over the countryside,
Harmonious as a copper kettle, used and black.

Unheeded beauty girt you which you never knew.
Nature, being blind, mingles the good with the bad.
Its showers, wetting you, dirtied your skies, it's true,
Yet reared a rainbow arch of triumph over you.

ROMANCE DE LA TARDECITA

(*Translated from Silva Valdes' latest volume, Romancero del Sur, by Warren Carriere*)

Beneath the silent wing of bird
The evening softly sinks its head,
And of the sun remains but one

Deep resonance in warm — blood red.
The huts atop their slender poles
Are shadows now that Day has fled.
Guitars are bright with call to sing,
And throbbing strings to song are wed.
The horses in their glistening pen
Now move about with restless tread
And flash of silver in their teeth
As they with summer moon are fed.

AUTUMN LONGING

By Zoola Young

The golden leaves have fallen.
Trees are bare.
The bonfire's smoke is drifting everywhere.
The wooded mountains,
And the deep blue sky,
Urge me to take my gun,
And stalk the ridges where the buck deer lie.

I see the many lakes,
Small, dark, clear green;
The shadowed trails;
The swift and frothy stream.
Yet here am I, with beds and bread to make.
Sternly I tell myself my work to do.
Memories of hunting trips we took last year
Should be enough to keep me satisfied —
And yet, in a strange fashion, they are not:
They only turn my urge into a longing.

SIX POETS OF BELGIUM

By CLARK STILLMAN

Belgium is a bilingual country, with Flemish the native language of slightly more than half of the population and French the native language of somewhat less than half. These two languages are radically different, French belonging to the Romanic group and Flemish to the Germanic. The French of Belgium is of course the same language as that of France. Flemish is fundamentally the same as Dutch, the difference between the two being comparable to the difference between British English and American English.

Since some Belgian writers use Flemish and others French, it follows that, from the point of view of the medium of expression, the country has two literatures. However, the situation is such that neither of these literatures, even where important works are concerned, is able to do much towards giving Belgium prominence in the literary world. The works in French are either unduly neglected in favor of the more numerous and more widely distributed products of France or they are simply absorbed into French literature and, in the eyes of most of the world at least, Belgium is not given credit for having produced them. The literature written in Flemish likewise suffers somewhat from the fact that there is a larger literature in the same language in a neighboring country, but it labors under the added handicap of not being written in one of the great languages of world intercourse and therefore even its outstanding works do not come often or easily to the attention of the world.

The following eight poems are translations from the work of six Belgian writers of the modern period, for whom very brief biographical notes are here given.

Writers in Flemish

Guido Gezelle (1830-1899) was born in Bruges and spent his life as a Catholic priest in his native province of West Flanders. A master of words, he wrote poems which live in the mouths of his people as well as in the esteem of critics.

Urbain van de Voorde was born in 1896 in Blankenberghe in West Flanders. He is an official in the Belgian Ministry of Education and well known as a poet and critic.

Marnix Gijsen is the pen name of J. A. Goris, who was born in 1899 in Antwerp. Dr. Goris, in addition to playing an active part in the Flemish literary scene, has held various government positions and is now in New York, where he served recently as Deputy Commissioner for Belgium at the New York World's Fair.

Writers in French

Charles Van Lerberghe (1861-1907) was a native of Ghent. He devoted his life, which came to an untimely close, to the production of a small quantity of ethereal poetry and a still smaller quantity of carefully wrought prose.

Max Elskamp (1862-1932) lived and died in his native city of Antwerp, to which he left a folklore collection now housed in a small museum. His artfully ingenuous poetry strikes a purely individual note.

Maurice Maeterlinck was born in Ghent in 1862 but has spent most of his life in France. He is living at present in New York City. Internationally known as a dramatist and essayist, he is not often given his due for his early poetry.

From "THE DARK FIRE"

Though heavenly goal was barred to me
when my illusions came to halt, —
your eyes are timeless stars to me
upon my soul's vast gothic vault.

And though relentless matter's laws
(your darkest whim) foretell our graves,
still you, the lovely mystic cause,
go rustling through cathedral naves.

For never, if not in this now,
will all of paradise come true —
and none lives more your nameless life
than he who, raised by dream and strife,
keeps building self anew in you.

— *Urbain van de Voorde* (1896 -)

MY FATHER

My father, he was righteousness.
He took the heavy burden on himself
to be a noble man in word and deed.
That is the lovely, foolish hurt
that, since our Master Jesus Christ,
the strongest man goes under from.

His eyes were quiet blue, a distant sea;
his words all light, like sudden rockets free
in steely night.
He laughed bright red and kissed impulsively
my foolish headpiece and my youthful dreams.

The tall ships that come up the Scheldt from sea,
he could direct their loading faultlessly.
He liked to say their names,
to play with them, naively, like a child:
Calcutta, Pantos, Karatschi,
like lovely beads.

He knew the harbor: longing and despair,
in early morning mist
and in the evening with the foghorns rasping through the air.

He loved the woodlands he had loved in youth.
He knew the trees the way we know our friends.
He knew the winds and harvest lore,
and wanted hunters' roughness to inure my callow hands.

My father, he was righteousness.
He had the good love for all true and quiet things.

Within the shadow of a village church
his simple tombstone lies.
I know his thought is over me like clouds in peaceful skies.
His red and timid hands he stretched out, dying, toward his
Christ.

— *Marnix Gijsen* (1899-)

SONG

And if some day he should come back
What should he then be told?
— Tell him he was waited for
Until my heart was cold.

And if he question me again
Then how should I explain?
— Greet him like a sister then;
Perhaps he suffers pain.

And if he asks me where you are
What words should I reply?
— Give him then my ring of gold
And do not make reply.

And if he still should wonder why
The room is all so bare?
— Show him then the burned-out lamp,
The open doorway there.

And if he question me at last
About the final sleep?
— Tell him that I smiled for him,
For fear that he would weep.

— *Maurice Maeterlinck* (1862-)

PRELUDE

(From *La Chanson d'Eve*)

From my mysterious voyage far
I only bring one song for you,
One song and picture — here they are.

I have not brought a single rose,
I did not touch a thing that grows;
They also like to live.

But all for you with burning eyes
I looked within the sea and skies,

Within the fire and in the wind,
In all the splendors of the world,
To learn to see you better yet
In shadows when the sun has set.

To learn to hear you better still
I put my ear to every sound
And listened at my every chance
To every murmur and the dance
Of light in quietude profound.

And all to learn how one should touch
Your quivering breast and mouth's delight,
As in a dream I laid in bliss
On sparkling water, silver light,
My gentle hand and eager kiss.

— *Charles Van Lerberghe* (1861 - 1907)

SUNDAY SONG

Now Sunday comes around again
And the sun and morning sky
And birds that in the gardens fly,
Now Sunday comes around again,

And children dressed in white today
And towns that in the distance drowse
And under trees, along the way,
The sea and Flanders through the boughs.

Now is all the angels' day,
Michael with his flock of swallows
And Gabriel on his wings who follows,
Now is all the angels' day;

Then on earth the happy folk,
My people, all my country folk,
Who go by one or go by two
And laugh at life in distance blue;

Now Sunday comes around again,
— In their mills the millers doze —

Now Sunday comes around again,
And my song, now, to its close.

— *Max Elskamp* (1862 - 1932)

AT EVENING

Already my holidays all are past,
And youth grown old is fading fast.

Take in my flags now out of the cold
Of the night, my flags so vainly bold.

All is over, my Sundays dead,
My poor little Sundays all are dead.

What use farewells? Now week-days come
With the hands that labor, red and numb.

And fortunate those with a heart so strong
For whom work waits as light as song.

The week-days rule, the hand is king,
And out to sea too swiftly wing

The ships by Sunday held in port;
Gone forever the slow disport

Of dreamy hours and peaceful meals —
Already the Jews talk business deals.

Already my holidays all are past
And youth grown old is failing fast.

All is over, my Sundays dead,
My poor little Sundays all are dead.

— *Max Elskamp* (1862 - 1932)

O RUSTLING OF THE RIVER REED

O rustling of the river reed
Could I but know the song you plead!
Whenever breezes pass along
And move your bending stem in song,

You bend and, bowing to the shore,
Stand up and meekly bend once more,
And sing the song so gladly keyed,
The song I love, O slender reed.

O rustling of the reedy sedge
How often, often sat I not
Beside the quiet water's edge
In that all solitary spot,
And watched the water's rippling trail
And touched your stalks so weak and frail
And heard the song so sweetly keyed
You sang for me, O rustling reed.

O rustling of the river reed
How many people do not heed
The singing voice you lift in song,
But listen not, and pass along
By to where the heart grows cold
Forever plagued by clinking gold,
Not understanding all you plead,
O my beloved rustling reed.

And still, O rustling slender reed,
Your singing's not so slight a deed.
God made the stream, God made your stem,
Lo, God said: "Blow," and breezes came,
And breezes blew your green and brown
Thin stem that rises up and down.
God listened, and your song sad-keyed
Pleased God Himself, O rustling reed.

Oh, no, my slender rustling reed,
My soul disdains not what you plead,
My soul that from the same God came,
Who gave me feeling in his name
That understands your plaintive cries
When up and down you bend and rise.
Oh, no, oh, no, my rustling reed,
My soul disdains not what you plead!

O rustling of the river reed
Like yours may my sad song be keyed,
Complaining come before His feet
Who gave us both our life to keep.
O You whose love does not forsake
The sick speech of a reedy brake,
Scorn not my sad complaint in need,
I, but a sick complaining reed!

— *Guido Gezelle* (1830 - 1899)

THAT EVENING AND THAT ROSE

Oh, many and many an hour with you
I've passed the time with pleasure,
And never has one hour with you
Been less to me than treasure.
Oh, many and many a flower for you
To offer you I've plucked
And like a bee, with you, with you,
Its honey have I sucked.
But never an hour so dear with you
As long as it could stay,
And never an hour so sad for you
When I must go away,
As the hour when I came close to you
That evening, and sat down,
And heard you speak and spoke to you
Of all our souls had known,
And never a flower was plucked by you
So beautiful to see
As the one that shone that night on you
And soon might come to me.
Although for me as well as you —
Oh, who can cure this wrong? —
An hour with me, an hour with you
Is not an hour for long,
And though for me and though for you
So dear a flower we chose,
A rose, be it even a rose from you,
Remains not long a rose.

But in my heart I say to you —
Though how long no man knows —
I keep three well loved pictures: you,
That evening, and that rose.

— *Guido Gezelle* (1830 - 1899)

PORTAGE

You have not left us.
You have opened the door into your Garden
And softly closed it again.
For many years your hands have clasped the latch
But each day you did not press the catch.
Today you slipped quietly in to rest among your flowers,
To wander up each path and look for radiant blossoms.

You can never die.
Each returning Spring will bring your memory;
Daffodils, violets, crocus will call through you;
Summer flowers will show your face;
Autumn breezes will whisper your name.
You have passed into Life's Golden After-Glow
Where Time is Eternity.

— *Blanche A. Sherman*

AUTUMN COQUETRY

Apart there stands an ancient cherry tree,
Its crooked trunk with ivy draped, and set
Against a mass of goldenrod; for yet
The fading summer lingers. Still to be
Frost's killing sting.

It's like a fairy tale but yet the truth
That cherry tree wears flowers in her hair
Without a hope of fruit, nor seems to care —
An old tree's effort to recapture youth
And hope and spring.

— *Salibelle Royster*

THE WHITE WOLVES

By John Heard

We are the wolves of the Arctic,
  The whelps of the Polar Pack,
Like frozen foam-flecks flying
  In the howling Norther's track.
Our teeth gleam white and flashing
  To seize and to crunch and to tear;
Our strength is the strength of the ocean,
  And the ends of the world our lair!

From Hudson's Bay to Russia,
  Barrow to Melville Sound,
To Lena in Siberia
  Extends our hunting-ground.
Here do we fight our battles,
  Here do we glut our wrath,
And woe to him who ventures
  To cross the White Wolves' path!

Throughout the long, dark winter
  We sleep, and breed our young,
Till the wild spring-gales arouse us
  With the hunting-songs resung.
And then the pack unstretches
  Its sinews stark and cold;
The young wolves break their fetters
  And go forth among the old.

And some of the pack are grizzled
  With the scars of many a year,
And some are crowned with victims,
  High pilèd tier on tier,
For only the strong of the litter
  Are safe from their sires' wrath;
Woe to the new-born weakling
  That stands in the old wolf's path!

Swift is our chase and cunning,
For short is our hunting-day;
To the East and West we travel,
And South in quest of our prey.
Oh, still we lie, and calm we lie,
With front ranks opened thin,
And long, clear leads of open sea
That welcome vessels in!

Then one by one, slow-moving,
The White Wolves close their ranks,
Closer and closer pressing
Upon their victims' flanks.
Loud groan the wrenching timbers,
Loud wail the straining sides;
Yet none knows where their grave is
But the red sun and the tides!

Our wrath is never sated,
And our hunger never stilled;
We weary not of slaying,
And our prisons are not filled;
So some we kill at the catching,
And some we carry away
To hold in our ice-bound prison
Till dawns the Judgment Day.

Broken and worn with our hunting,
Glutted with many a prize,
We turn again to our kingdom
When the sun grows sick and dies,
With the gray-backed waves beneath us
And the howling gales behind,
Roaring our songs of triumph
That roll and crash and grind:

We are the Wolves of the Arctic,
The whelps of the Polar Pack,
Like frozen foam-flecks flying
In the howling Norther's track.

Our teeth gleam white and flashing
To seize and to crunch and to tear;
Our strength is the strength of the ocean,
And the ends of the world our lair!

LEOPARDI

By Robert Levin

Many there were who shouted down his fears,
Clear voices, strong with knowledge of the way,
Who left the cripple there to face the years
With fretful question of each dying day;
To lift his ardent face unto the sky
And rather beg his answers of the moon
Than seek to halt the pageant passing by,
Too proud to ask these busy men a boon.

Yet those who needed on their paths no guide
To make oblivion their thoroughfare
Are known no more; and he who lonely died
(Leaving for pain the altar of his pride
And one thin book of verse), lives everywhere
The heart of man seeks respite from despair.

THE INFINITE

By Giacomo Leopardi

Always dear to me was this lonely hill,
And row of hedge, that blocks so great a part
Of the ultimate horizon from the view.
But reclined, I imagine to myself
Spaces unlimited beyond the hedge,
And superhuman silence, and the most
Profound repose; whence for a little while
The heart is not afraid. And since the wind
Is rustling through these plants, I go comparing
That infinity of silence to this voice:
And there rises to the mind the eternal,
And the dead seasons, and the present one
And living, and its murmur. Thus amid
Immensity my thought has drowned itself:
And shipwreck in this sea is sweet to me.

— *Translated by Robert Levin*

HEIL HITLER!

By HARRIET RUKENBROD

Through seven evenings' red, descending suns
A German mother prayed a speechless prayer
And waited, with her wide-eyed little ones,
Their father's customed step upon the stair.
In this new Fatherland where Brown Shirts stalk
And for some Glorious Aim decree men die,
Where Hate and Guile in every hamlet walk
And track down innocence, and falsify,
Where torture camps sate men's sadistic lust,
Where Christian thoughts mean death when overheard,
Where sabers clang and life is less than dust,
A woman waited — but there came no word.

Perhaps he'd gone too much to church of late —
He swore he'd always worship as he'd choose;
Perhaps satanic eyes, in Nazi hate,
Had seen him speak with rebels, or with Jews.
She fed her children what there was to eat
And gave the smallest lad her daily share;
She moved about, somehow, and kept things neat,
And mingled all her hopes and fears with prayer.

At last along the hall bold footsteps sound;
Not his, that knock which made the door-boards groan!
The house walls tremble, and her pulses pound;
With every knock her heart turns dead as stone.
She fumbles at the door's two sturdy locks,
And opens to the sight of four armed men.
The first one thrust at her a small black box.
"We thought you'd like to see your Karl again.
Heil Hitler! Here's his ashes, frau," he said,
"In case you might have wondered where he'd gone.
Stop screaming! You can't resurrect the dead.
Your brats and you are leaving, so come on!"

"But where? Oh, where? For Christ's sweet sake, be kind!
Our lives are in this house my husband built!"
He laughed, "The river's not too full, you'll find.
Or shall we end ————?" He seized his dagger hilt.

"My little ones! O God, O God," she cried.
"We'll go, but let me feed and dress them first!"
They toddled, frightened, sobbing, to her side,
As rude hands yanked her to the street and cursed.

A winter wind that numbed the little faces,
The frozen filth of hidden alley-ways,
A week of begging at a hundred places,
And baby eyes with hunger in their gaze . . .
Not sympathy, but terror, did they see
In hearts of friends they timidly implored,
For no man dared to aid a refugee,
And tyrants' edicts could not be ignored.
Yet one man, looking furtively about,
Threw in the snow a coin, and hurried past.
As eager, seeking fingers dug it out,
The mother cried, "It's food — thank God — at last!"
And with a wailing child upon her arm,
She hurried to the nearest side-street shop.
The keeper viewed the woman with alarm,
And shouted, as she touched the door sill, "Stop!"
"No refugees allowed — by law!" he cried.
He wished they had not looked so starved and thin.
"Too bad to be so cruel to them," he sighed.
"She might have known I couldn't let her in."

The sick child whimpered whimpered weakly at her ear,
As on she stumbled, trying every store.
And every keeper greeted her with fear;
The kindest handed her a note — no more.
But praise to God for what was written there!
At six o'clock, it said — the coming day —
A ship would dock (it designated where)
And carry homeless refugees away.

A gray dawn found them waiting at the pier,
The children clinging to her trembling hand.

She stared at crowds of people milling near,
And guards, who marched with pomp along the sand.
She saw young soldiers, standing grim and hushed,
And officers, and bayonets amassed,
And refugees, whose tragic souls lay crushed
Like torn and broken shreds of Deutschland's past.
The scene about her dimmed through rushing tears —
The men, the sands, her babes, the harbor clock.
And suddenly a scream rent through her ears;
A little one had fallen from the dock!

Too late she saw. His curly head rose once.
She shrieked for help. The people only stared.
"My boy!" she cried. A vacant, dumb response.
They might have helped her, had they only dared,
But warning guards kept marching up and down.
She plunged to save him. Neither rose again.
Yet those were human eyes that watched them drown;
And those who turned away were really men!

Into the sea's embrace the vessel swept
From Homeland sod that could be home no more;
And as the friendless and the orphaned wept,
"Heil Hitler!" echoed up and down the shore.

DISAPPOINTMENT

A leaf sighed,
The wind made a fluttery sound,
I thought it was you and smiled
As I turned around.

A bird sang,
Its call was so lonely, so wild,
I knew you were gone and cried —
Like a frightened child.

— *By Virginia Lee*

TWO POEMS

By AURA LEE BARCLAY

MY IMMORTAL SELF

I am a part of all men of all time and they are a part of me.
When man began his trek upon the unfolding road I marched with him.
When, like the measured wash of waves upon the shore, empires rose and fell, I beat with their rhythm.
As my breath was in my ancestors, so shall I breathe again and again in those who descend from me.
I am no nameless grain of dust; I am an unique history of periods past.
Unlike the swinging pendulum whose motion drops into nothingness my yesterdays are ever present.
Misted ages flow through the whole of me; their muted notes mingle; they echo in all I do and all I am.
The mystery of myself is the still folded bud of a flower; its secret lies hidden within.
Sometimes, briefly, the petals are pressed apart; I glimpse the inner wonder.
Then the door is closed; the vision lost; the fragrance vanished. Yet it is there within.
From to-day's threshold I extend into all time and space.
I always was and always shall be.
I AM IMMORTAL.

YOUR MAGIC TALISMAN

O mother, tell me in what lovely land
You found the charm to make of climbing years
A stairway to the stars? What unseen hand
Assists you as you weave life's falling tears
Into a robe of gems? What mystic rite
Gave you the key to beauty's call, that gay
And perfumed touch of spring, the twinkling light
That cheers your fellowman along his way?

Perhaps the Master of all harmony
Has pressed aside the screening walls so you
Can hear the music of his melody.
Perhaps your eyes have glimpsed some sweeping view
Beyond the mists that cloud the path of man.
Is this the secret of your talisman?

"CALL ME!"

Written in a German Prison Camp by
Lt. H—— M—— of the Polish Army

Translated by M. WANKOWICZ *and* E. T. CONSIDINE
from the ORIGINAL POLISH

Listen! for I shall sing to you for the last time,
Just once more before you shall forget my face.
You are so beautiful. You have such grace. You have such charm.
— Who knows it better than I? . . .

Listen! Don't lose your youth in tears by day and night,
Enjoy yourself! Love! Take happiness from life!
And when Fate gives you everything
Don't hesitate.
Don't think of me.
Go onward, never looking back.
Don't call me.
Go on, on to the top,
And turn a bright, fair face to all the world.
Do not count the days, the years.
Do not call me
From behind these bars, from slavery.
Do not call me . . .
Don't regret,
It shall not be your designing: Fate will want it so.

Say to yourself: "Too bad . . . It had to be!"
And lock your teeth, face ahead. Go on.
Chase old memories from out your heart
As we must all today;
Don't hesitate.
Don't call me.
My letters — burn.
And do not call me.
Leave me to my lot,
And simply say:
"Fate wants it so."

But . . . listen! Anything may happen.
If life should treat you harshly —
And foreign eyes should glare from every side —
And if Fate places hardships on your way —
In the blackest night, as in the grayest day,
Don't hesitate
But call me!
Over these walls of stone and steel,
Call me!
From a memory, a thought, a dream,
Cry out to me in this universe,
Across the shadow lands, the dark frontiers, the distances,
Call me!
Be unashamed,
It shall not be your designing: Fate will want it so.

Somehow,
Over seven mountains, over seven rivers,
Your cry will come to me.
And though you should be infinitely far,
Your plea, quivering across the earth,
With trembling will pierce my heart:
You will have called me!
And I will come running through the rain and through the snow.
You will have called me!
I will break through every wall,
And be with you again;
And Fate will want it so.*

---

* The translator writes:

> Here is a heart's cry, wrenched from the breast of a poet in chains. Scratched in tiny letters it was brought back from "there," hidden in the musty folds of an old peasant's coat. The peasant had been released because he was a farmer, not a soldier, released to return to the devastation that was his homeland.
>
> The poet-lieutenant is still "there." Months have gathered into years, years of idleness and waiting, and a hopelessness verging on despair.

CONSERVATIVE'S CREED

By TEMPLE HOLLCROFT

This land of Schoharie is a good land,
It is deep rich earth, no shale and no sand.
My father of six generations past
Spoke these words. I see him now with his hands
Made brown where he gripped the crumbling soil fast,
When he found the home he longed for at last.

For he loved these hills as a man might love
A woman; poplars upon slopes above,
Valleys beneath, naked, voluptuous.
He walked by the river, waters that move
Between whispering banks; he felt the lush
Grass cushion his feet as if it were moss.

Up the reed-lined Mohawk for thirty miles
He had poled his flatboat. Among the piles
Of tinware, mattresses, blankets, and sacks,
There was sitting a timid girl. He smiled
At her over his shoulder, pulled the slack,
And with stalwart arms forced the long pole back.

At the blows of his ax the white chips flew,
As he built a home that was strong and new
In the mellow depths of the valley there.
He cleared the flatlands in spring. There grew
In summer the corn. In the autumn air,
The long tassels tossed like his daughter's hair.

Since that year, five sons now have gone their way,
Until I, the sixth, am left here today;
And here, where my ancestor stood, I stand.
My grandfather's grandfather heard him say:
This land of Schoharie is a good land,
It is deep rich earth, no shale and no sand.

POEMS

By Elva A. Smith

LITTLE WHITE ALTARS

Go on building those little white altars;
Altars of faith, we need them, now;
We were so sure of ourselves once, so strong
In arrogance, so schooled in how
The centuries had brought tolerance to men,
And culture, and the white hope of peace;
Now we are hysterical and afraid,
Now we are thrown off balance, almost cease
To believe in mankind and his supremacy
Over animals; horrors crash against the mind,
And find us without anchor, in strange seas,
Our hands are empty and our eyes are blind;
We need those altars now, help us to kneel
And pray before them, so that we may chart
A course to safety in a war torn world,
A port of safety for the mind and heart.

PORTRAIT

Sir Galahad is grave and shy,
And guided by a dream, his feet
Follow a pathway to the sky,
Where God and men and angels meet;
The years lie stretching, clear and true,
(And Galahad has eyes of blue).

Sir Galahad is full of charm,
With looks and laughter, boyish ways;
Temptation, in a scarlet gown,
Will walk beside him all his days;
(And love might well retire and weep,
To see his heart thus lie asleep).

I hope and hope that he will grace
Thy altar, and Thy love proclaim,
That through long years of faith, his life
May blend in beauty with Thy name;
(Yet God, if he should stray from Thee,
Please give Sir Galahad to me!)

AUTUMN AND SPRING

This has been a lovely October day,
And, walking in the sun, I almost believed
It was Spring again;
Thus do I often forget that I am no longer young,
My heart sings, and my eyes are bright with laughter;
And walking with you, my step matches yours,
And my mind easily steps backward to meet yours;
It is easy to forget, easier to let you forget.
But I was walking today, in October,
And suddenly, I knew that Autumn
Is the last, lovely mellowing of the dying year,
Spring is the promise, and this is the fulfillment;
Who can say which is the most beautiful, or best?
But they do not belong together,
For Winter comes after October,
And Summer follows Spring.

CITY PRAYER

By Curt Storm

Let me know blue waters, O Lord!
Take me to broad fields and far hills,
Breathe crisp winds of high places
Into my soul. Let me be intimate
With walls and pasture springs
And all clean things.

Sever the natal cord that binds me
To cities — cleanse my lungs of smoke
And my heart of sordid fear.
Yellow and black faces haunt me,
Give me the one clear face of nature
For companion; let there be one race,
One place, a single entity, a hand's breadth
Between mountainside and sky.

TWO POEMS

By Henry Bagwell

" — FROM WHENCE COMETH MY HELP"

Gaunt mother,
brooding above us,
we have laid us down in your lap
against the night.

Guard us this night.

Mother serene,
cloud-companioned,
eyrie of eagles,
shoulder the stars aside
and shelter us
from evil.
Austere and everlasting
you stand,
cold and still —
(we are so small,
so small!)

This night,
high on your slopes
we sleep,
and in our dreams
the wind in your pines
murmurs,
soothes.

Stern mother,
grant us this night
one thought
from your eternal
contemplation of the infinite,
and your peace
will flow into us,
your calm
pervade us
till the day.

MOUNTAIN CABIN: EVENING

Now in the firelight
friends meets friend,
and shadows
in the warm room
dance intricate ballets
on the walls.
Our work done,
we rest
by the fireplace,
and our talk is the wind,
our room the world.
In this hour
we come close together,
though we sit apart,
not touching with hands,
and seeing only
an eye, a cheek,
a flame-touched head,
and peace
is with us.
When the fire dies
and embers drowse
we'll sleep,
filling the room
with dreams.

★ ★ ★

T A U N T

Tonight in your arms the world falls away,
Nothing remaining, just we two together.
Together in ecstasy, tenderness, sorrow.
One in our want.
But Life's taunt is "Tomorrow!"

— Charles H. Toll, Jr.

TWO POEMS

By SOPHIE HIMMELL

I SHALL TURN AWAY

I shall turn away
From these turbulent caves of unrest,
And walk in the pine-sweet hills close pressed
Bosom to bosom.
I shall turn away —
Turn away unregretful
From the fretful
Billows whose water
Is too salty for thirst,
Too brisk for repose.
I shall walk in the path of the sun
Where the rose
Blossoms untarnished by brine.
Though the sea-ghost of your going
Should bar the way —
Should hold me as seaweed holds driftage,
I shall turn away.

SOMETHING THERE IS IN AUTUMN

Once in late October
I saw flame-haloed trees:
About them birds were flying —
I sang because of these.

Something there is in Autumn
Of Spring securely kept:
Small birds, and tree-tops lifted —
Because of these I wept.

GESTURE

Love will never come anymore!
Let them weep whom tears can ease;
Let them die whom Death can please;
Me, I hide the thing you shattered,
Never shall they guess it mattered.
Take the crepe from off my door!

DOWN THE PATH

By Hazel Griffith Davis

Thrilling in a song of youth
She wound
Down the path
With head held high
To meet her lover.
Not a sigh
Save from fallen leaves that lie
Rustling on the ground.

Proudly then they walked, forsooth,
Down the path.
Love calls to love
And a cooing turtle dove
Sounds the lingering lyric of
The mating call of youth.

Thus they walked
A year or more
Down the path.
Then sharp agonizing pain
Left a dark and crimson stain
As custom, creed, a narrow strain,
Quivering hearts asunder tore.

Alone —
She hears no more the dove
Down the path.
A tear is in her eye
But her head is proudly high.
Religious martyrs,
Some still die
Seeing not that God loves love.

FOR YOU WHO HAVE BEEN TO SEA

I went down to the sea.
I went to sea for years.
I loved the sea and the ships —
But I loved the ships more —
The grim, tense, ships,
The ships which fought for me.
I used to lie in my bunk,
My nice warm bunk,
Twelve inches from the port hole,
(I'm glad I'm home now)
And watch the waves pound —
Pound against the glass,
The two-inch glass —
Trying to get in —
Trying to get in —
Trying to kill the ship —
To kill me.
I would ride and sleep —
Feel the quiver of the ship —
As it fought the sea —
Headed into a big wave —
Come up shaking itself —
Shaking itself like a dog —
And groaning.
You who have been to sea —
You will understand —
Understand with a sad heart
That the ship loses —
Loses its battle in the end.

— *Emory C. Pharr*

WINTER LANDSCAPE

Winter is a Christmas package;
earth wrapped in white tissue,
tied with the silver tinsel of a burnished brook,
decked with fir and holly berry.
The gift within is spring.

— *Helena Sidis*

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